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Offer ends 11.59pm 31st March 2021!



# Look inside!

## ABOUT NOW

- 4 News from the gardening world
- 5 Be the First to Grow... three new perennials
- 7 New for the Garden
- 8 Get Planting... winter bedding
- 10 The Natural Gardener

## FEATURES

- 14 Garden of the Week
- 18 There's still time to sow summer bloomers
- 22 Give your shed a makeover
- 24 Beautiful hydrangea varieties for the home and garden
- 28 Carol Klein talks about the thrill of taking cuttings to produce new plants for free
- 58 My Favourite Place: Cambridge Botanic Garden

## WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

- 35 Plant bulbs for autumn flowers
- 36 It's time to do the 'Hampton hack'!
- 38 Naomi Slade is starting a (friendly) battle with pesky slugs and snails!
- 39 Terry Walton plants some bonus crops in space created by early harvests
- 40 Root your strawberry runners
- 42 Kitchen Gardener Rob Smith has perfect peas but is dealing with beastly blight!
- 43 Medwyn Williams gives veg growing a mix-up

## THE EXPERTS

- 44 Join our begonia expert for an exclusive show
- 45 Demystifying the dahlia-stopping process
- 46 Stefan Buczacki solves your plot problems

## YOU AND YOUR GARDENS

- 12 Your Garden Gems! You share your top tips
- 30 Readers' gardens
- 52 Your letters and photos

## OFFERS & COMPETITIONS

- 51 Win prizes with our crossword
- 54 Double up for an extra 1p on a fantastic 100-bulb allium collection
- 57 Try a stunning sedum 'Atlantis' delivered to your door from the Garden News Shop

# Time to make a garden visit!

As we gradually come out of lockdown and start venturing out into the wider world, it's good to see so many of our wonderful visitor gardens open their doors again. The last few months, normally so busy for them, must have been a desperately worrying time.

We're blessed with a wonderful variety of gardens that are open to the public across the UK - not only are they a lovely day out in themselves, they can also serve as a great source of inspiration for our own gardens.

You don't have to have acres to copy an idea you might spot in a border - and you'll mostly find that staff are all too happy to help with advice and plant identification.



So let's get out there and do our bit for the economy by supporting our terrific visitor gardens; maybe have a coffee when you're there too - every little helps!

This week's magazine has a strong emphasis on things we can sow and plant now to keep our gardens going for longer - and there are still plenty of flowers we can sow now that will bloom later this summer (see page 18). Many gardeners worry about missing the 'sowing window', but this week we identify the plants that will grow quickly to add some dazzle to your plot this year.

And don't forget to plan beyond summer too - there are autumn-flowering bulbs to get in and winter bedding to think about to guarantee a genuine year-round spectacle. I love planning what's next but the lockdown has at least made me enjoy the present a little more! Have a great gardening week - and get sowing!

*Simon*

Garden News  
Editor

## Get in touch!

#GNREALGARDENS

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GN staff are currently all working from home and unfortunately cannot receive readers' mail - but if you are able to email your letters and pictures, please do!



## Our cover star: Mimulus 'Andean Nymph Bicolor'

Modern varieties are one of the quickest annuals to flower, producing blooms to enjoy in just weeks. For more fast flowerers see page 18.

## Britain's most trusted voice in gardening



14

Garden of the Week



42

Rob Smith picks his tasty pods



36

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## THE SHOWS MUST GO ON!

**Live competitions for top exhibitors can still go ahead**

**S**ome live flower and veg competitions are to return in September, the only ones of their kind that will be staged in the UK this year. Successive cancellation of this year's flower shows has robbed top exhibitors the opportunity to pit best blooms and produce against those of rivals in what for many has ironically been an ideal growing season.

Now determined exhibitors in the dahlia, chrysanthemum and giant veg world have elected to stage their own socially distanced events rather than adopt the online route some societies have taken.

For one year only four growers, all members of the National Dahlia Society (NDS), have created the



Social Distance Dahlia Society (SDDS) hoping to attract up to 34 top competitors to stage their best blooms in a special show at Abercorn Garden Centre, near Chelmsford, Essex, in September.

"Participation is by invitation only," said organiser and GN dahlia expert Dave Gillam. "Given current circumstances it would be impossible to stage an open show.

"Luckily Abercorn Garden Centre offered use of its coffee shop, providing around 75 square meters of space, leaving at least three metres between exhibitors, who will stage at

different times between 6pm and 6am on September 9-10.

"There will be 15 classes. Blooms will be judged early on Thursday, September 10, remaining on public display until the Sunday. Although there are no prizes, with exhibitors from around the UK coming rivalry to be 'Best in Class' will still be fierce!"

■ **For show information visit [www.abercorn.uk.com](http://www.abercorn.uk.com).**

### Open competition

Manhandling outside marrows and giant cabbages while social distancing at a single event is an entirely different proposition.

Feed manufacturer and sponsor Canna UK is currently finalising an open competition composed of four to five regional events, sending a mobile unit to key locations around England and Wales where growers

can have their entries accurately weighed, measured and evaluated, with cash prizes up for grabs. Locations are likely to include Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Northumberland, possibly the south of England and Wales, with the event run between September 24-28.

"This is an open competition, so anyone can enter by registering interest on the Canna UK website," said technical support manager Nico Hill. "We'll be using NVS rules, appoint a couple of independent judges to oversee things and also have a representative from Guinness World Records present just in case there's a world beater."

■ **To register interest visit [www.canna-uk.com](http://www.canna-uk.com).**



**Huge veg won't draw a crowd this year!**

## Gardens' glasshouses and cafés re-open

**G**lasshouses, exhibition spaces and cafés have opened in a number of gardens around the country, including Kew and Wakehurst Place, the Eden Project and Birmingham Botanical gardens. Glasshouses have opened with either one-way systems or limited, pre-designated routes in place

with visitors entering and exiting via different doors, and staff monitoring and guiding attendance and flow. All visits still require pre-booked tickets and toilet facilities vary from venue to venue.

New projects are being planned such as a new urban garden at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, while in August Kew

will stage a bespoke botanical sculpture themed around international travel, created by the winners from the acclaimed Netflix television programme 'The Big Flower Fight', which aired in May. Along with many other garden centres Dobbies has opened its 68 restaurants across the UK, including Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.







WORDS: IAN HODGSON. PHOTOS: ALAMY, SHUTTERSTOCK, GAP



Meanwhile, Terry Porter, shows manager for the National Chrysanthemum Society, said two shows were planned to go ahead at the County Showground in Stafford, in September for early plants and in November for lates. Some classes will be removed from the schedule and face masks will be compulsory for those who decide to enter.

"Chrysanthemum growers love a challenge, and putting on two 'live' national shows with Covid-19 around will certainly test us all. The reward will be keeping everyone safe and seeing a host of blooms on the show bench," said Terry.



# BE THE FIRST TO GROW

Editor at large **Ian Hodgson's** pick of the best new perennials and a tried and tested favourite



## 'These three will shine brightly in any border'

### Astrantia 'Sparkling Stars White'

The shimmering white flowers of this herbaceous perennial are produced in profusion on strong stems over a long season. Good for cutting. Adaptable and useful perennial for any moist, well-drained soil in sun or semi-shade. H/S: 70cm (2¼ft). **Price:** £6. **From:** [www.lettham-plants.co.uk](http://www.lettham-plants.co.uk); tel: 01620 822350.

PROFUSION OF BLOOMS



HARDY AND DURABLE



### Echinacea 'Sundress'

Selected for both hardiness and durability, this white-flowered variety of coneflower *E. purpurea* will flower in mid-summer the year after sowing. Ideal for border or containers in moist, well-drained soil in full sun. H: 30-60cm (1-2ft), S: 50-70cm (1¾ft-2¼ft). **Price:** £2/30 seeds. **From:** [www.owlsacreseeds.co.uk](http://www.owlsacreseeds.co.uk).

LOVED BY POLLINATORS



### Verbascum 'Snowy Spires'

Gorgeous cottage garden perennial with ice-white blooms accentuated by a magenta-coloured, fuzzy centre. Lush, green foliage gives this accent plant a stately air. Bees and other pollinators also love it. Any moist, well-drained soil in sun or semi-shade. **Price:** £3.50/50 pelleted seeds. **From:** [www.dobies.co.uk](http://www.dobies.co.uk).

TRIED AND TESTED

### WOODLAND GEM

### Geranium macrorrhizum 'White-Ness'

This RHS AGM award winner is an undemanding, semi-evergreen ground cover plant with attractively divided, aromatic foliage and an abundance of small, pure white flowers from early summer. Very pretty in the woodland garden or a shady spot or for naturalised planting. H: 30cm (1ft), S: 45cm (1½ft). **Price:** From £4.99. **From:** [www.ballyrobertgardens.com](http://www.ballyrobertgardens.com); tel: 028 9344 0101.



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**GN1407**



## SAY IT WITH 45,000 FLOWERS!

**Huge floral birthday message to NHS outside Buckingham Palace**

National Health Service birthday celebrations last week were marked by two special flower beds in front of Buckingham Palace containing a total of 45,000 blue and white flowers.

Created by The Royal Parks charity, each bed measured 60 sq m (spelling out NHS in giant letters that could even be viewed from the sky). The special flower beds are located in the iconic setting of the Memorial Gardens, and mark a change with tradition in a year in which the work of the NHS has become so important for the country.

Every summer, the Memorial Gardens are planted with 22,500 plants grown in the Hyde Park



The floral tribute to the NHS will be in place until September

The new flower beds are in a spectacular setting



Nursery. One of the plants included in the annual design is scarlet geraniums, selected to match the tunics of the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, but this year marks the first variation of the design in decades.

Mark Wasilewski, park manager at St James's Park, said: "We believe it's the first change of design to the Memorial Gardens in decades,

perhaps since the First World War when the flower beds were planted with potatoes. We wanted the flowerbeds to replicate the colours of the NHS, so the letters are formed of white begonias, against a blue background of drought-resistant succulents. Happy birthday to the NHS and thank you for everything you do."

The NHS flower beds will remain until mid-September, after which the Memorial Gardens will be filled with the usual 50,000 yellow wallflowers and red tulips, ready for next spring.

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**From: [www.thenaturalgardener.co.uk](http://www.thenaturalgardener.co.uk); tel: 01584 890092.**

**PLANT A BLOOMER**  
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This range of novelty cards has wildflower seeds embedded in a range of paper shapes, which includes heart, star, angel, shamrock and Christmas tree. Each comes in a ribbon tied pocket, with planting instructions. **From: [www.plantabloomer.co.uk](http://www.plantabloomer.co.uk).**



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**A LONDON FLORAL ILLUSTRATED GUIDE**  
**Natasha Goodfellow, £8.50**

This guide is a beautifully illustrated map that folds down to a handy pocket-sized document listing around 85 addresses leading you on a fragrant trail of London's key floral destinations, from markets and nurseries to botanic and physic gardens via trend-setting florists and flower schools. Presented in an attractive slip case and divided by area. **Finch Publishing, [www.finchpublishing.co.uk](http://www.finchpublishing.co.uk).**





## Get Planting!

Plants to get in the ground right away...

# Race ahead with winter bedding!

**T**his is the ideal month to sow seeds of winter bedding plants to produce vigorous, young plants that are raring to establish in autumn so they perform to their best throughout late winter and early spring. The benefits of growing them from seed are cheapness, particularly if you need a number of plants, and the opportunity to specifically choose tones for colour themes with spring bulbs, such as tulips or hyacinths.

Winter pansies, wallflowers, forget-me-nots and sweet Williams have all become staples of the late-winter to spring garden. Although used as annual bedding, in reality they're either biennials, flowering in their second year, or short-lived perennials, but as their performance often diminishes with age they're normally discarded after flowering.

Most varieties are adaptable, growing in a wide range of soils in sun or part shade, although wallflowers prefer drier, free-draining soils in full sun, sulking with wet roots and a shady position. Sow seed in trays of compost, then

prick out into modules, which makes them easier to grow on and plant out, rather than using lots of little pots. Most seeds need light to germinate so lightly cover with compost or Vermiculite and place in a well-lit position in a well-ventilated greenhouse, cold frame or sheltered position outdoors, but shade from hot sun. Keep seeds moist at all times to aid germination and establishment. Prick out when seedlings are large enough to handle using a general purpose, peat-free compost and water in. Grow on and provide plants with a

**Sweet William**  
Biennial or short-lived erect perennial. Dense heads of blooms in red, pink and white.  
From [www.mr-fothergills.co.uk](http://www.mr-fothergills.co.uk)

liquid feed. Pinch out growing tips of pansies and wallflowers if they become leggy to stimulate bushy growth. Plant out in late summer or early autumn, positioning plantlets between bulbs before they're planted so you get evenness of coverage and bulbs aren't swamped.



**Winter pansies**  
Short-lived perennial with colourful blooms. Use varieties for winter displays.  
From [www.kingsseeds.com](http://www.kingsseeds.com)



**Forget-me-not**  
Annual or short-lived spreading perennial in blue tones, as well as pink and white.  
From [www.chilternseeds.co.uk](http://www.chilternseeds.co.uk)



**Wallflowers**  
Short-lived, upright, shrubby perennial in rustic red, bronze, orange and yellow tones.  
From [www.suttons.co.uk](http://www.suttons.co.uk)

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**NEXT WEEK** Long-blooming salvias for summer colour

## Be a winter pansy winner!



**1** Sow seed in trays in bright light, keeping compost moist.



**2** Prick out into modules and grow on, feeding seedlings monthly.



**3** Plant out in their final positions in late summer or early autumn.



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## The natural GARDENER

By eco-gardening expert Karen Murphy



PHOTOS: ALAMY & SHUTTERSTOCK

## The cut-throat world of the wildlife garden

My 2020 garden wildlife diary has, so far, seen me note down some pretty lively goings-on. I've spied lots of interesting animals, too - it's amazing what you encounter if you just sit, relax and watch the wildlife world go by. In late March there was the sparrowhawk that popped by for lunch one day to pick off one of our many starlings - he spent a good 10 minutes making sure it was completely dead before

he flew off to eat it. There have been endless red kites soaring and whistling up above, green- and goldfinches, pipistrelle bats at dusk and red-tailed bumblebees. Some other bees made a nest in an unused pipe in our wall and it's been lovely to hear them buzz back and forth. A sneaky spider spotted the new residents and made his web around the hole so a few unfortunate bees got tangled up in his clutches. I gently removed the web - I decided our bees need all the help they can get.

Perhaps the most intriguing - and distressing - event happened quite recently. In the middle of the night we were woken abruptly through open windows by unearthly screams from the front garden. A bird? A frog, perhaps? Not at night, surely. By the time we'd gathered ourselves it had stopped, so we thought no more of it. The next morning, though, we found a hedgehog carcass, scooped entirely of its soft parts,

Reporting in my wildlife diary from the scene of the crime!

with only its prickly outer left. The poor thing had been calling out in distress. This obviously wasn't the work of an amateur pet cat, so for that we're grateful - this was the work of a professional, a discerning hunter scraping out its nightly snack from an unpalatable coat like we would an avocado.

To get a clear idea of the culprit I contacted Garden Wildlife Health ([www.gardenwildlifehealth.org](http://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org)), where you can report diseased or dead animals to help wildlife charities gather information about what's going on in our

### Keep an eye out for...

#### Elephant hawk moth caterpillars

Large, grey and white with distinctive eye markings, commonly found munching on fuchsias. Pupates into a 'neon' pink and green moth.



Have you had any badger visitors?

## SMALL WAYS TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



### Have a bake sale

Why not organise a distanced tea party, bake sale or plant sale to raise funds for our struggling wildlife charities?



### Water vigilantly

Staying on top of the watering in dry spells aids your flowering plants to stay healthy and moist and produce more nectar.



### Reduce your footprint

Seek out plants grown in the UK to reduce carbon footprint, pests and diseases. Look for flag on labels or find out from garden centres.



### Get a free guide

Sign up for a free guide on how to create a pollinator paradise. [www.butterfly-conservation.org/how-you-can-help/plots-for-pollinators](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/how-you-can-help/plots-for-pollinators).





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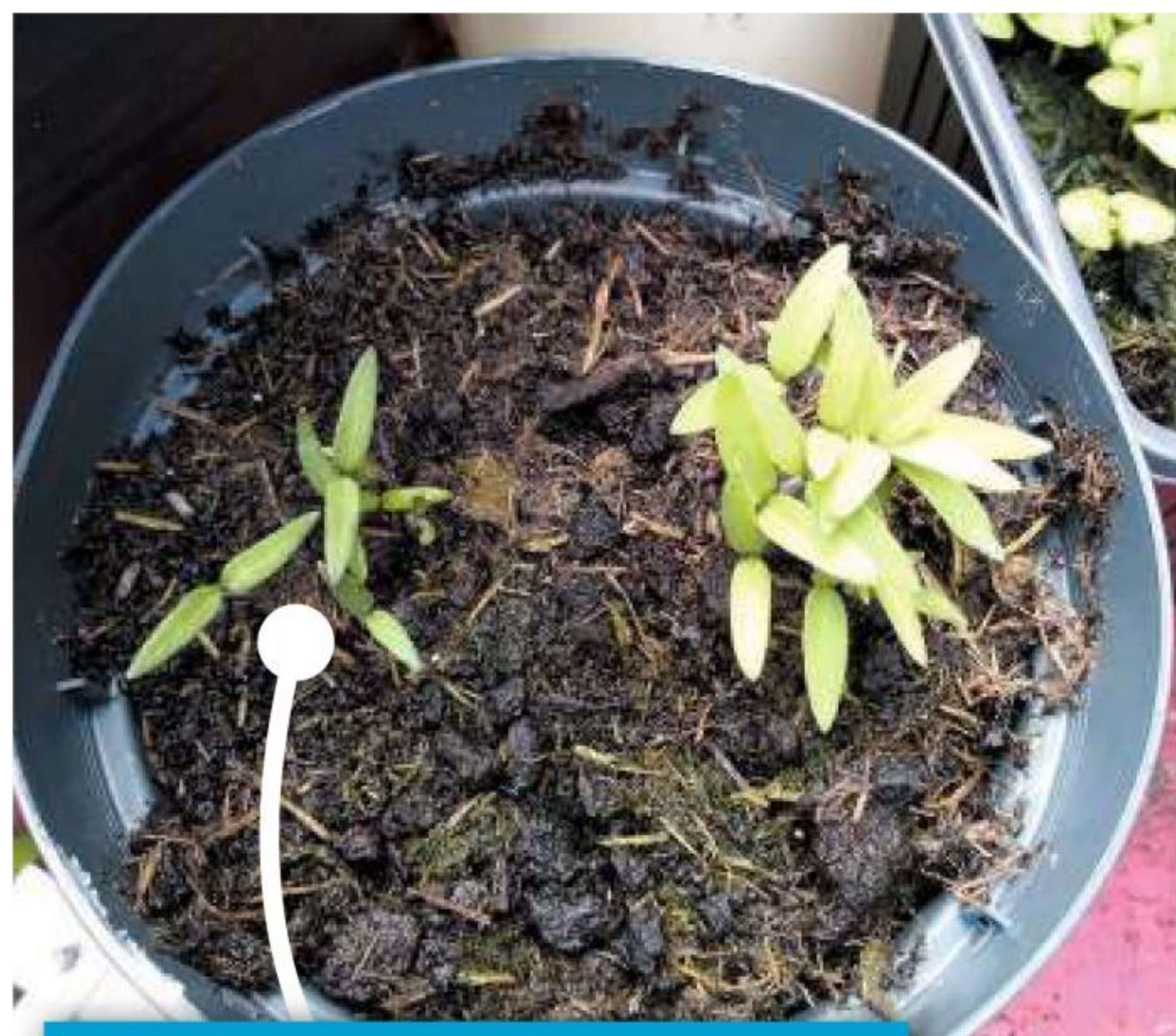
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# Your garden GEMS!

Top gardening tips from our readers



## A SLICE OF TASTY TOMS

Thought you might like to see a picture of the tiny tomato plants I've grown. Not from an ordinary packet of seeds but from two slices of a cherry tomato left over from dinner that I put in a pot with compost and watered – just 10 days later these wee beauties popped up! There are loads of them so I've potted them up and shared with my neighbours.

**Sandra Scott, by email**



## AMAZING UPCYCLING!

In the early days of Covid-19 when we couldn't access the recycling centre, we decided to upcycle waste in our garden and made a table out of old tree logs and an old gate. I now use it to keep my pots on. I also made a veg nursery using my son's old cot bed parts. Fully netted from inside, I grow beetroot there and it seems to be doing well.

**Jana Undugodage, Newcastle-under-Lyme**

**Simon says:** Ingenious, Jana - particularly the idea of using the old cot bed! Great upcycling and well worth being our tip of the week.



## WIN! A Peckish Westwood Nestbox! £29.99

Jana wins a Peckish Westwood Nestbox which is a great way to help birds during the breeding season, courtesy of Westland. For more details about these products visit [www.gardenhealth.com](http://www.gardenhealth.com).



## BEANS ARE TIED UP

Terry Walton wrote about giving runner beans a helping hand by assisting them around the cane stick. The easiest way I've found, rather than physically assisting them, is to tie a sandwich bag tie around the bean and the cane very loosely, which will enable the bean to find its own way around the cane.

**Ken Rudge, by email**



## MARVELLOUS MARKERS

I've used old bamboo border as veg markers. I used Sharpie pens and then yacht varnish to preserve them.

**Michelle Downs, Doncaster**



## PERFECT PALLET

My husband found a pallet at the top of our garden and made me this beautiful trug and a set of line markers. The glass of cider was my contribution!

**Denise Musson, Warwickshire**

## WATER WITH A LOTTA BOTTLE

I collect cold tap water runoff, which you need to run before it comes hot, into saved empty milk bottles. These go into my polytunnel under staging or in any spare space – there could be 50 or more bottles! In the winter, any sunshine warms the water in the bottles slightly, which raises the temperature in the tunnel very slightly at night. Then in summer I have lots of water saved to use when my water butts are all empty.

**Pat Grubb, by email**



Got a great idea or time-saving tip? Share them with our readers. See page 3 for our contact details

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# Garden OF THE WEEK



**Gardeners:** Graham and Sally Watts

**Location:** Dale Farm, Sandy Lane, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2EA

**Size:** Just under two acres

**Aspect:** South-facing

**Soil:** Neutral, slightly acid around pond

**In garden:** 13 years

**Open:** [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk) (check website for updates)

**Contact:** [grahamwatts@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:grahamwatts@dsl.pipex.com)



# Adventures in horticulture

This plant-packed, two-acre Norfolk garden with a wonderful 'botanical party atmosphere' is still evolving after 13 years of work

**Words** Naomi Slade  
**Photos** Neil Hepworth

In the Norfolk garden of Graham and Sally Watts, plants rule the roost. They jostle in the borders and sprawl across the paths, engulfing seating areas and doing their best to obscure the pond, which prevails purely due to its size.

The result is a botanical party atmosphere that lasts from spring until late autumn and beyond.

But in some ways, this should come as no surprise. Graham trained in horticulture and was a parks apprentice before moving on to Kew and, although he worked for Cambridge City Council for many years, he clearly has not lost his touch.

Sally, meanwhile, spent three years training in floristry, before moving to the council's parks department where she grew bedding plants and exercised her green fingers to the utmost extent, which she still does.

"Sally is a propagator by persuasion," smiles Graham, "and she is also a forensic weeder; she does a proper job, which I

can't really match. But I'm the only one who goes in the pond as I can swim, so it's a pragmatic relationship based on survival!"

When the couple arrived at Dale Farm 13 years ago, it was a far cry from its current glories. The garden was completely overgrown and rather small for the size of the house, with the adjacent land owned by a development company awaiting



With their backgrounds in horticulture, Graham and Sally have created a botanical party atmosphere that lasts from spring until autumn



Hot colours from Californian poppies and, right, *Lychnis coronaria*



Above, geraniums, lychnis and alstroemeria are peppered with dots of ammi to soften. Below, the large pond looms large at the centre of the garden

planning permission for new housing. "People were not interested as they saw the pond as a problem, but we liked it. The house dates from 1760 and we think that the pond and bog garden is the site of a small gravel pit - we could have built a couple of cottages from the flint we've found," says Graham.

With planning permission denied, the development company eventually sold the land and the garden was extended to its current size. Graham and Sally stripped out the scrub, keeping the mature trees on the boundary and planting commenced. To the rear of the house, an irregularly



*Continues over the page*





## Billowing borders

The large pond is surrounded by tall perennials with plenty of room to intermingle pleasingly

## Naturalism

In this garden the plants have the upper hand. The barely-restrained planting gives a joyous and bold overall effect

shaped lawn is curtailed by a border and a path that leads to the pond. Throughout, the couple have added seating and sculptural details.

To the front is a gravel garden, and although they had originally considered the space for a car park, the plants had other ideas and geraniums, nigella, Californian poppies and anthemids have migrated merrily from the soil into the superficially inhospitable adjacent stony substrate. "We don't major on design; the point of the exercise is to accommodate as many plants as reasonably

possible," says Graham. "My great hero is Beth Chatto; my parents lived near her garden when I was growing up and the philosophy of 'right plant right place' was very much not the general view in the mid 60s! And we loved the way that Christopher Lloyd pushed the boundaries with plant associations - he could be quite provocative."

Graham is into hydrangeas in a big way and has interwoven his collection of 150 varieties throughout. "There was a chap in Bedford who was giving up his garden and had lots of mature

hydrangeas that he didn't want to leave. My friend also collects them so we took 200 large plants away, planted them out in rows and kept our fingers crossed. We didn't lose a single one," he enthuses. "The great thing about gardening is that you learn through experience, you can be as professional or as amateur as you like, but it's about having a go."

The garden is in a constant process of evolution and Sally grows hundreds of annuals, biennials and new perennials each year. "It's good to leave some space in the borders so you can

have some infill," she explains. "Having the same plants year after year is dull, so I experiment with annuals and unusual plants to give it some pizzazz."

They're fans of the seed ranges from Sarah Raven and Chiltern Seeds; Graham plants out what he can squeeze in, and the rest are sold to raise funds for charity. And while they don't feel they have a signature style as such, the garden is edited and nudged in the right direction, and, according to Graham's records, they've so far amassed about 1,000-1,200 different plant



## The couple's summer specials



### Penstemon 'Bodnant'

Sumptuous violet-coloured, foxglove-like flowers that go from summer to autumn. Up to 80cm (2¾ft) tall.



### Dahlia 'Wizard of Oz'

A wonderful baby-pink ball dahlia up to 80cm (2¾ft) tall. Pairs perfectly with whites and blues in a vase.



### Phlox paniculata 'Graf Zeppelin'

Lovely billows of white blooms with pink eyes. A tall, back to mid-border perennial at 80cm (2¾ft) tall.



### Trachelospermum jasminoides

An evergreen climber with heavenly scent to grow against a warm, sunny wall. Up to 9m (30ft) tall.

## 'Orchestrated chaos'

Graham and Sally have amassed about 1,200 plant varieties, and the garden is in a constant process of evolution

varieties, not including the annuals. "I recently described it to a group as 'orchestrated chaos'!" declares Graham, cheerfully. "I'd describe it as stuffed," says Sally, dryly.

But, with the option of retreating to their deck and gin-and-tonic boat on the pond, and spending a happy hour looking for the grass carp lurking in the depths, they're undeterred. Says Graham: "People who like clipped box are a bit unsettled by our garden, it makes them uncertain. But that's ok, it would be a bit dull if we were all going for madness!"

## Graham and Sally's top tips

**1** Salvias do well in free-draining soil. As long as they don't get waterlogged they can be quite cold tolerant.

**2** People worry about growing *Hydrangea aspera* as they think it's tender and won't take the frosts, but in our experience they always recover. They may go a bit crispy but don't give up on them and dig them up. Wait for two or three weeks and it'll be like the cold weather never happened!

**3** If you have a pond with a weed problem like we have with parrot's feather, as long as it's land-locked and at least 1m (3¼ft) deep, try grass carp. It's a herbivore and eats the weeds for you – it's a worker!

**4** Repel muntjac deer by hiding a lump of Wright's Coal Tar Soap in a stocking in the



Grass carp are hungry herbivores and will eat your pond weed!

middle of your rose bushes. They give it a wide berth, but you have to keep it in the garage as it smells awful!



# It's not too

Get these gorgeous flowers going now to enjoy blooms this year!

Words: Graham Rice

You want me to sow annuals in the middle of summer? I hear you say. "This is flowering time, not sowing time!" Well, yes and no. It's true that many annuals are now at their peak, or even past it, but there are some

annuals whose seed you can sow now and which develop so fast they'll burst into bloom before winter brings everything to a dead stop. These are plants that germinate and grow quickly and then flower while plants are still small. Sow seeds at summer's peak and they'll fly. But choosing the right variety can be crucial.

Why not mix snapdragon-like *linaria* with *eschscholzia*?

## Linaria

This is a pretty plant that has gone out of fashion, which is odd because it's colourful, easy and can flower in as little as six weeks from sowing. It comes with pretty little snapdragon-like flowers in both soft shades and stronger colours, plus striking bi-colours, and will self sow without being a nuisance. Look out for the Licilia Series in blue, peach, red or violet and the sparkling 'Fairy Bouquet' mixture.

● Don't confuse these annuals with the invasive perennial toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*).

perfect plants to start now

## Calendula

Taller calendulas simply have too much growing to do before they flower so keep those for spring sowing. Dwarf varieties, however, flower surprisingly quickly as summer heat sparks them into speedy growth. 'Apricot Pygmy' is dwarf with subtle apricot flowers. If you prefer something more vibrant try pale 'Lemon Daisy', or 'Daisy Mixed', although I found that the less easy to find 'Costa Mixed' flowered even earlier.

● Best in sun with an extra watering in the early stages.

Add sunshine with calendula, or try lemon-coloured 'Daisy Mixed (below)



Find an array of colours in the 'Polka Dot' mix of cornflowers



## Cornflower

Traditional tall cornflowers need a long growing season, in fact they're at their most productive and colourful when sown in September to flower in May. But, again, there are shorter varieties that will soon be in flower if sown now. 'Polka Dot' is a very pretty 30cm (1ft) tall mix of at least seven colours while 'Midget Blue' and 'Midget Purple' are even shorter.

● These dwarf types bush out well from the base, yielding stems to snip for posies.

## Eschscholzia

California poppies come in an exceptional range of colours, including many with prettily rippled petals or silver foliage. Sow seed now and there's time for them to flower and shed seed this year. Dwarf, 25cm (10in) varieties in single colours work best. 'Pink Chiffon' comes in strawberry-and-cream colouring, 'Apricot Chiffon' is pink and peach.

● Self-sown seed will germinate in mild winters and early spring for months of sparkling colour next year.

The delicate flower cups of California poppies





# late to sow!



Alyssum is a like a frothy carpet of tiny blooms

## Alyssum

This bright white traditional edger flowers quickly from seed at any time except winter, especially if you choose one of the newer, vigorous, large-flowered varieties such as 'Snow Crystals' or the hard-to-find 'Clear Crystals' in purple or lavender. Very useful where something else has faded away early and I've also seen alyssum sown in cracks in paving towards the edges of a sunny patio. Wet weather in October usually brings flowering to an end.

● **Always best in full sun.**

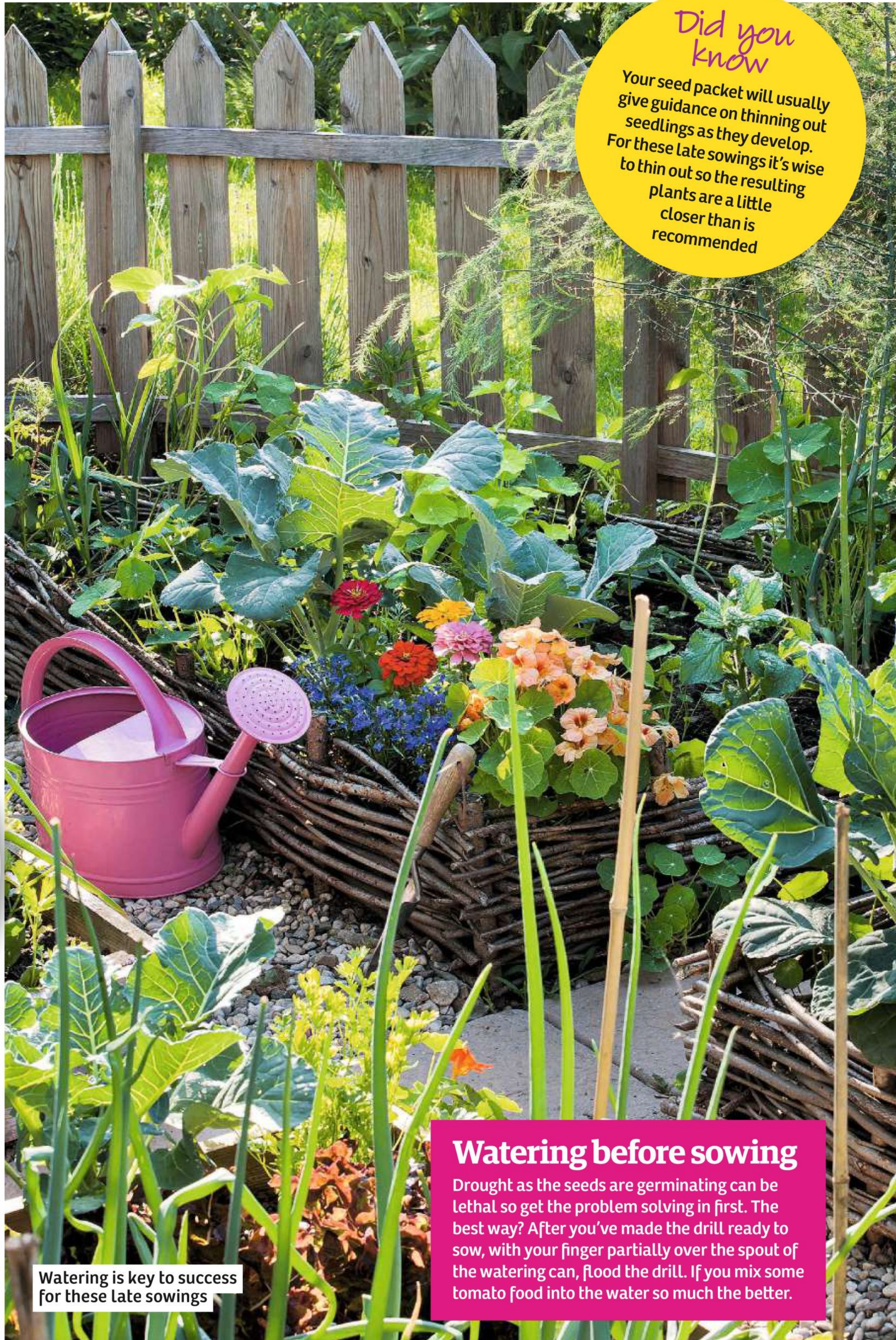


Pretty yet bold, poppy-like linum

## Linum

Related to the blue-flowered linseed grown for its oil in the countryside, this wiry little annual features large, bold, upward-facing, poppy-like, red flowers with a shimmery, silky look. Very pretty among autumn sedums, there's also a white-flowered variety with a red eye, 'Bright Eyes', and a new mixture, 'Charmer', that includes unusual coppery-peachy shades and a pretty pale salmon with dark eyes.

● **Deadhead for more blooms.**



*Did you know*

Your seed packet will usually give guidance on thinning out seedlings as they develop. For these late sowings it's wise to thin out so the resulting plants are a little closer than is recommended

Watering is key to success for these late sowings

## Watering before sowing

Drought as the seeds are germinating can be lethal so get the problem solving in first. The best way? After you've made the drill ready to sow, with your finger partially over the spout of the watering can, flood the drill. If you mix some tomato food into the water so much the better.

*Continues over the page*





Beautiful blotching on mimulus is hard to resist

## Mimulus

Modern mimulus varieties are about the quickest of all annuals to flower – just six weeks in some cases. And they'll produce flower buds whenever the days are 13 or more hours long, so will make buds until well into September and then flower for longer. Varieties? 'Magic Blotch Mixed' has a wonderful range of fiery and softer shades in sparkling mixtures with pretty speckles and blotches.

● **Like most of the flowers in my choices, mimulus appreciate some sunshine – but they hate drought.**

## Nemesia

Nemesias come in two groups: large-flowered varieties such as the 'Carnival', with vivid flared trumpets in bright, sunny shades, and dainty, smaller-flowered varieties in pinks and white and especially blues, 'Blue Gem', with flowers a little like tiny snapdragons. Nemesias are naturally bushy and branch well, and the tendency of the 'Carnival' types to burn out in summer heat is avoided later in the season as temperatures are cool when summer sowings flower.

● **Deadheading is especially important with both groups.**



Enjoy a riot of colour with nemesias

## Moisture is crucial

Keeping the developing seedlings consistently moist is important. A combination of summer temperatures and moisture will keep them growing strongly, although you may need your organic slug pellets. Also, be sure to prevent taller plants shading your developing seedlings or they'll simply fade away.

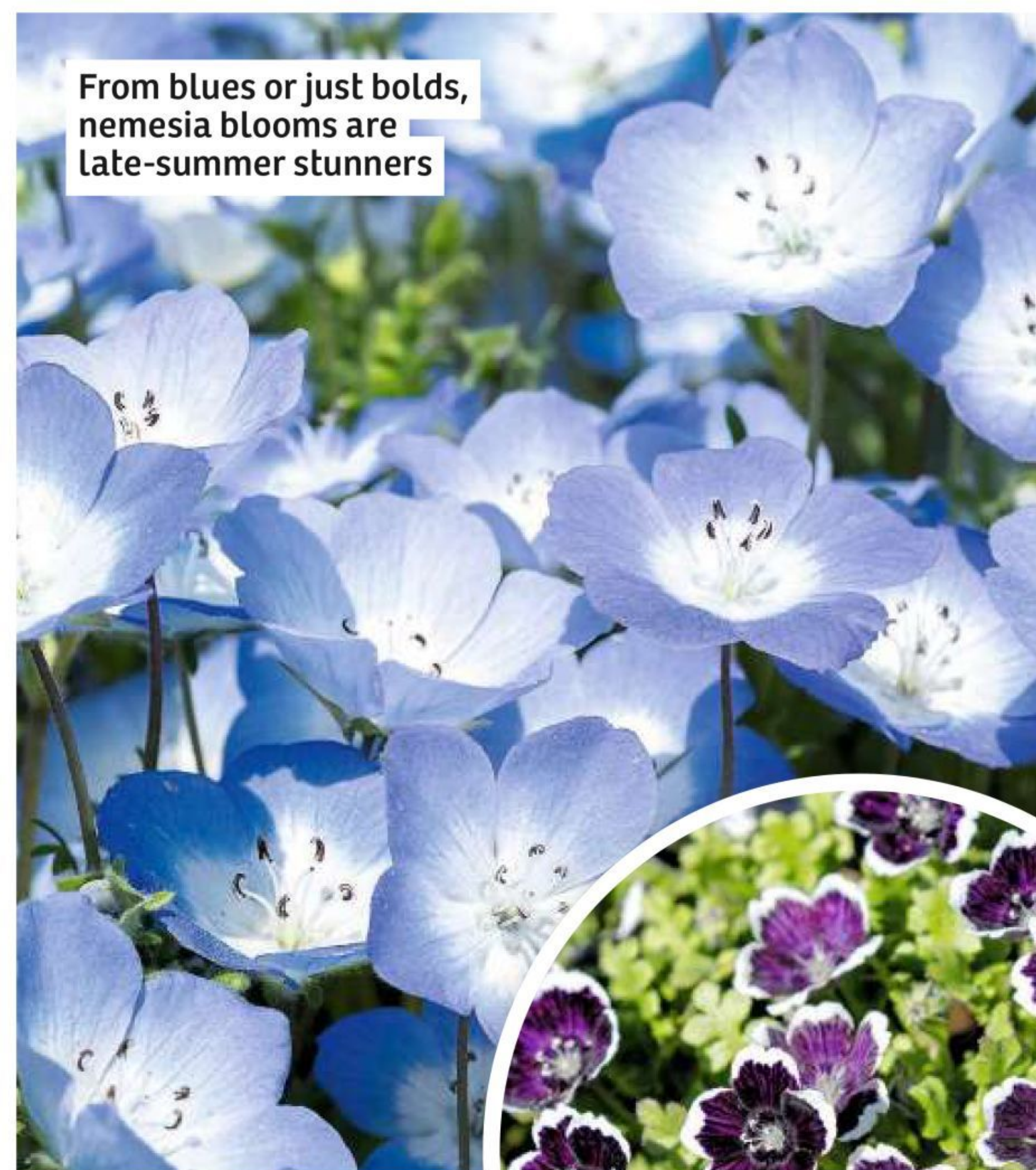


Only sow dwarfing varieties now

## Nasturtium (tropaeolum)

Sowing nasturtiums at this time of year can help avoid damage from cabbage white caterpillars and blackfly. Only choose dwarf, bushy varieties for late sowing and give them a cosy corner where they'll be sheltered from the first autumn frosts. Modern varieties tend to flower more quickly than older ones, so try 'Baby Rose' in deep pink and 'Bloody Mary' in changing patterns of red and yellow.

● **Once they're established, nasturtiums thrive in dry conditions.**



From blues or just bolds, nemesia blooms are late-summer stunners

## Nemophila

Pretty little saucers face upwards from low and spreading plants. Enjoys a little more shade and a little more moisture than many annuals, but mine, sown in last month's heat and watered once, were through in five days.

*Nemophila menziesii* has white-eyed, sky-blue flowers; *N. maculata* has purple-veined, white flowers with five bold purple spots on each; 'Penny Black' has black flowers with a white rim – and they all come true from seed with no muddy intermediates.

● **Ideal on the shady side of the patio.**





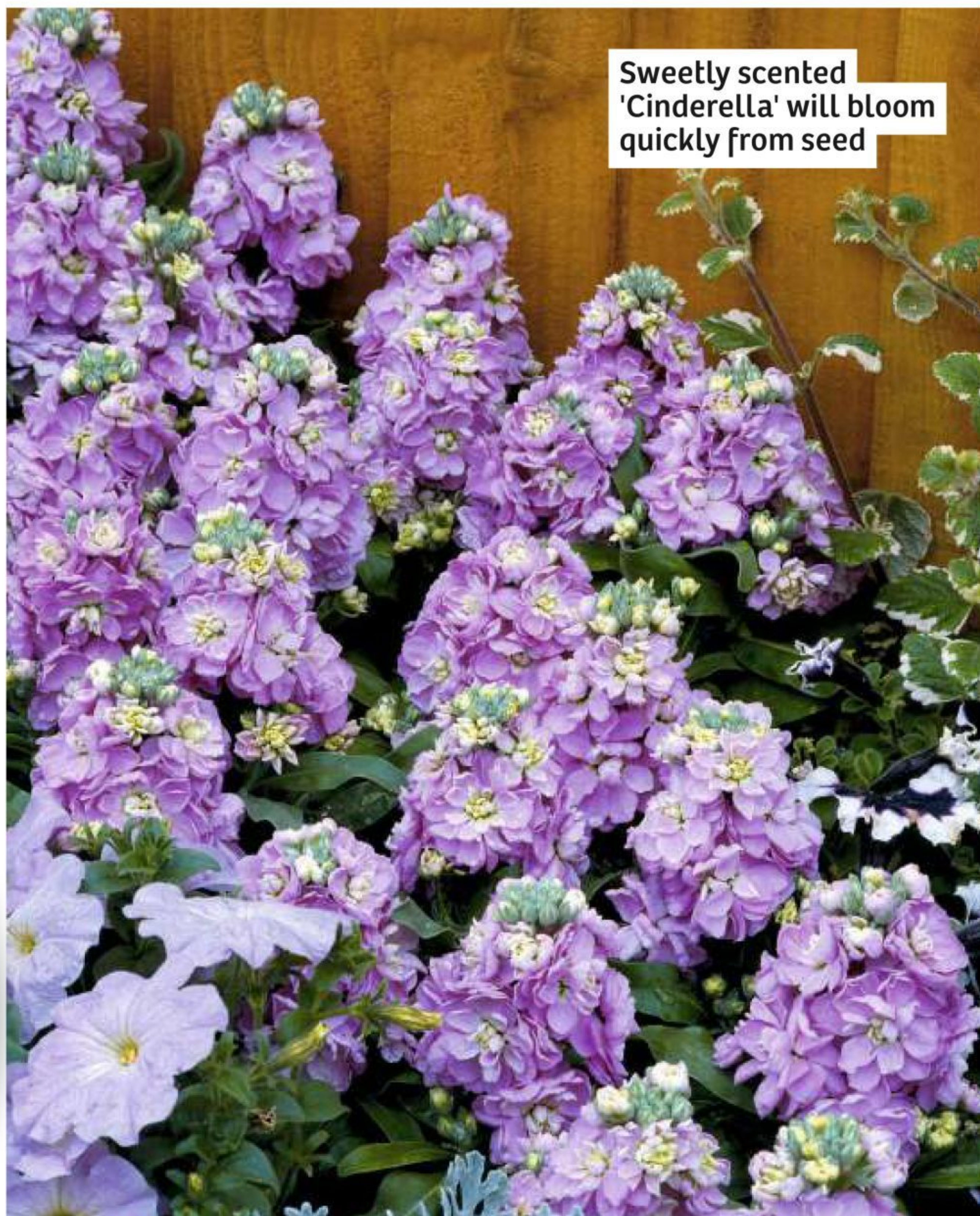


### Did you know

As autumn approaches, you'll often find that growth slows down while at the same time flower production increases as plants try to ensure that they set seeds before growth stops altogether in the cold weather



Sweetly scented 'Cinderella' will bloom quickly from seed



Aim for high summer success by sowing now

## Sunflower (helianthus)

No one in their right mind would sow the usual tall sunflowers now, they just won't flower soon enough. But I sowed the 30cm (1ft) 'Choco Sun' seeds this time last year and enjoyed a brilliant late display. And they don't just produce one stumpy little stem with a flower perched on the top. No, the stems branch naturally, giving a number of bright, dark-eyed flowers with a more natural look.

● **Good in individual pots in a group on the patio.**



Summer isn't summer without sunflowers!

## Stocks (matthiola) 'Cinderella'

Stocks come in a baffling range of different types, with either single or double flowers and many are tall, needing a long growing season, and have passed out of fashion. 'Cinderella', however, is different. Neat and stocky in growth, it comes in a blend of over a dozen colours that flower quickly from seed. A mix of doubles and singles – if you prefer doubles throw out the dark-leaved seedlings.

● **Try raising 'Cinderella' in pots and plant them into windowboxes.**

## SUPPLIERS OF SEEDS TO SOW NOW

- Chiltern Seeds: [www.chilternseeds.co.uk](http://www.chilternseeds.co.uk)
- Mr Fothergill's: [www.mr-fothergills.co.uk](http://www.mr-fothergills.co.uk)
- Sarah Raven: [www.sarahraven.com](http://www.sarahraven.com)
- Thompson & Morgan: [www.thompson-morgan.com](http://www.thompson-morgan.com)



# Give your shed a

**Now's the time to get it in tip-top condition so it looks good and serves its purpose well**

**T**he garden shed can take a lot of weathering over the year. Rain, wind and even sunshine can impact the structure, leaving it leaking and looking a little battered and tired.

All too often updating it can fall to the end of a long to-do list. However, as we're all spending more time at home than usual, now's the perfect time to stop neglecting your garden building and give it the care it deserves. Our top tips will help you restore it as a nice dry place to store your precious tools or transform it into a cosy garden hideaway - or even a home office!

**1 Improve the waterproofing** If your shed is constantly leaking and the contents are damp then it's definitely worth updating the waterproofing sealant you have used. If water damage has become too bad and the wood has begun to rot, then these pieces should be replaced immediately, as this can damage the overall structure.



Sheds can be wonderful extra rooms for either work or your hobbies



Consider a sturdy corrugated roof for your shed

**2 Update the roof** It isn't only the woodwork that might be causing damage to the contents of the shed, after a number of years the roof will need replacing. The Onduline Classic corrugated sheet is an incredibly lightweight, easy-to-install roofing system that can be used to give garden sheds a new lease of life. It contains no metal, so it will never rust and is made from recycled material, so it's very eco-friendly.

**3 Insulation** To make your garden building a more appealing and warmer place to be, it's worth adding insulation to the walls. Some cost-effective solutions are bubble wrap and also fibreglass wool. However, choosing a roof

with high insulation levels will also help keep the cold out. The Onduline Classic lightweight roofing product withstands windspeeds of up to 120mph (192 kph), ensuring your shed stays warm and dry during any winter storms.



If you're planning on sitting in your shed, consider insulation products



# makeover!

**4 Add a splash of colour** There was a time when most sheds were painted brown, but these days people are experimenting with exterior wood paint and choosing from pastel shades, neutral greys or even berry hues to add a new colour scheme to the garden. Painting the eaves or window frames in a different colour will also give the shed a new look and make it the envy of your neighbours. Also, Onduline has a large range of stylish roofing systems that come in attractive colours and even a tile strip system, called Onduvilla, to replicate a more traditional clay tile look.



A lick of paint can give a shed a new lease of life

**6 Replace the ironmongery** Over time, hinges and handles will rust and become unsightly. However they're cheap and easy to replace and can make a huge difference to the aesthetics of your shed, especially if you choose some ironmongery in a contrasting colour.



New door hinges will help your shed last

**7 Add some finishing touches** If you'd prefer to use your shed as more of a summerhouse, why not string up some fairy lights inside - and outside - as well as adding some curtains, a seating area with cushions and bunting for a bit of cosy charm. Complete it with a mini fridge for chilled drinks and a fan heater and you can use it all year round!



Enjoy your shed this summer!

Make the most of your space with clever yet cheap storage solutions

**5 Create more storage** Try old crates as box shelves for storage perhaps, or pallets and leftover bits of wood lined with hooks to hang up tools on. There are lots of cheap and cheerful storage solutions you can make without spending any money at all!

■ Visit: [uk.onduline.com](http://uk.onduline.com) for innovative roofing and waterproofing solutions.



# Hydrangeas: Beautiful varieties for the home and garden

In her new book, GN's Naomi Slade extols the virtues of one of the country's most-loved but often maligned plants – the ever-vibrant hydrangea

Words Naomi Slade

A flower of a thousand facets, the hydrangea never ceases to surprise and astonish. And while this plant may not have always been universally loved, it cares not one iota. The hydrangea is here to stay...

Fashion is a capricious thing and hydrangeas, more than many plants, have had their low points as well as their triumphs. Discovered but not applauded, passed over in the annals of



Hydrangeas belong to a large family

## The history of hydrangeas

While they're now grown all over the world, wherever soil and climate permits, hydrangeas are actually native to a wide area of southern and eastern Asia, including China, Japan, Korea, parts of the Himalayas and Indonesia. An additional two species, *Hydrangea arborescens* and *H. quercifolia*, are found in the USA, and there are many more in Mexico and South America that haven't made it into cultivation.

A number of plants, including magnolias, liquidambar, viburnums and lilies share this divergence in geographical range, and it's thought that the disjunction is due to the separation of land masses by continental drift.

Approximately 75 species of hydrangea have been identified thus far and, while Asia is home to the majority of these, there are dozens yet to be discovered, both there and in South America.



Zingy *Alchemilla mollis* teams nicely with the tonal shades of pink hydrangeas

Trebah Garden in Cornwall is a must for hydrangea fans. Right, skeleton blooms in winter

botanical significance, given away as an also-ran by those who might have cherished them. Yet hydrangeas have slowly surged, gradually building a reputation and a following; not catapulted to glory as a manufactured pop phenomenon, but gaining recognition the old way, through hard graft and reliability.

Throughout their history, hydrangeas have tended to divide people. Some think they're marvellous in almost every way; others consider them an abomination. When I first met hydrangeas, they were bulky, dated landscape shrubs. They grew in a row under the window in my grandmother's coastal garden, the flowers vast lumpen mops of dull pink and mauve that my grandad called 'Queen Mother's Hats'. Hydrangeas were simply not to my taste. Yet it's unfair to judge an entire genus on a couple of neglected specimens viewed with an



They make a superb formal hedge



# Designing with hydrangeas

In the garden, hydrangeas are handsome and versatile shrubs. They excel in a woodland setting, particularly if you choose ones with lighter-coloured flowers, and they can make a spectacular specimen in a mixed border. Consider using them as an informal hedge or avenue. This treatment is perfect along the edge of a path or driveway and generates a sense of journey or momentous arrival. Alternatively, containers of matching plants, set out along a path or up a flight of steps, are elegant and formal. Hydrangeas work well with

complementary herbaceous plants, such as heleniums or hemerocallis, and also with evergreen shrubs that have an opposing season of interest, such as azaleas or sweet box (*sarcococca*).

And, while in full floral spate the hydrangea will steal the show, in the depths of winter, the denuded shrub, with its charming, skeletal flowers, adds useful structure and interest to the garden. Underplant the shrubs with small bulbs, evergreen ferns and early-flowering plants such as hellebores for the best effect.



Your blooms will steal the show!



Hydrangeas work well in pots

uncompromisingly critical pre-teen eye. Reflection and experience, an appreciation of new developments and the simple turning of the world has made them not just freshly relevant, but ultimately desirable. They're now courted, coveted and cooed over, wherever they can be grown or shipped to.

While the bulky old faithfuls still exist, they're a renewed force in a landscape or woodland garden design. And they're now joined by newer, more compact plants; plants that are ideal for containers. Breeders have developed fresh lacecaps, airy as a bridal veil, and elegant, sophisticated panicles in cream and green. They offer the exquisite excitement of a flower that ages not just gracefully, but magnificently, with antique shades of verdigris, teal and damson, before finally fading to a spare but deliciously delicate skeleton in the garden. The versatility of hydrangeas must, in

part, have contributed to their renaissance. They're perfect as a container specimen and houseplant and are suited to floristry of all kinds. In the garden, they're design magic.

In my book I explore this flower of mystery and rejoice in its evocative, absorbing, chameleon bloom. The hydrangea renaissance is now indisputable. Quietly, these flowers

have crept into our interiors, gardens and hearts. As proof of our passion, thousands of hydrangea varieties now exist, while new ones are bred each year. Some will stand the test of time and others will prove ephemeral, but the genus hydrangea will persist alongside us. Blissfully indifferent to the vagaries of fashion, hydrangeas have taken centre stage.

## Choice varieties to covet

### 'Snowflake'

Some plants have all the luck and, with exciting pointed flowers and fabulous leaf colour, this hydrangea is a double threat to those in its class. *Hydrangea quercifolia* is native to the south east of America and it takes its species name from the lobed leaves, which resemble those of an oak – quercus. Although it still likes rich living and plenty of soil moisture, it produces its best autumn colours when grown in sun, which ripens the leaves to a blaze of purple, red and orange. This plant tolerates both acid and alkaline soil and, in this species, colour is indifferent to pH so the flowers remain a reliable white, turning pink as they age.

■ H/S: Up to 2m (6½ft).



### 'Bluebird' syn. 'Acuminata'

A thoroughly graceful and elegant hydrangea, the flowers of 'Bluebird' take a classic lacecap form; shapely and understated with large, clear, sterile florets around the periphery of a woad-blue dome of fertile blooms. The blue colour is reasonably stable with variations in soil pH, too, although it can be more mauve or even pale pink on a very alkaline site. In autumn, the large sterile florets turn to face downwards and are infused with magenta and mulberry, complemented by the foliage, which turns copper-bronze towards the end of the season.

■ H/S: Up to 1.2m (4ft).



Continues over the page



## Choice varieties to covet... *cont.*



### ***Hydrangea petiolaris***

This tall, handsome Korean native distinguishes itself from the shrubby rank and file with its vertical habit; scrambling energetically up walls, fences and pergolas, then producing flowers in a towering cascade. It's a particularly useful subject for an urban garden, taking advantage of vertical space even in the most challenging spot. While it's visually less dominant and dense than ivy, the twining stems similarly create valuable habitat for wildlife; places for birds to nest and nooks in which beneficial insects can overwinter. While it prefers a bit of sun, it's tolerant of shade and will eventually cover even deeply overshadowed walls. The stems anchor themselves to their support by means of self-clinging aerial roots.

■ **H: Potentially over 12m (39½ft), S: 4-8m (13-26ft).**

### **'Merveille Sanguine'**

One of the richest, darkest red hydrangeas going, 'Merveille Sanguine' was discovered as a sport, or mutation, of the old, pink hydrangea variety 'Merveille', and was introduced by Henri Cayeux in 1936. And it is a plant that's fabulously striking. The large, regular mopheads are made up of deep blackcurrant flowers, each with a central eye of vivid violet. 'Merveille Sanguine' is an excellent cut flower: use in an autumn arrangement with rosehips, hawthorn berries, scabious, maple leaves, chrysanthemums and amaranth.

■ **H/S: Up to 1.5m (5ft).**



### **'Endless Summer'**

When the first 'Endless Summer' hydrangea appeared, it was met with much excitement. Here, finally, was a plant that would rebloom, producing wave after wave of flowers on new wood all summer. This meant that it could be grown successfully in colder situations than could other *H. macrophylla* varieties. Since then, the breeders have developed a collection of hydrangeas under the 'Endless Summer' banner, including white 'Blushing Bride' and lacecap 'Twist-n-Shout'. The original is a handsome mophead that's classically blue, but will turn a pleasing pink in gardens with alkaline soil.

■ **H: 1.2m (4ft), S: 1.6m (5¼ft).**

### **'Miss Saori'**

There's something unutterably enchanting about bicoloured hydrangeas, and the lavish and richly ruffled mopheads of 'Miss Saori' are enough to captivate the most indifferent observer and would melt the stony heart of the most committed hydrangea-hater, should such an individual conceivably exist. As a garden plant, she's magnificent, a pint-sized floral explosion that performs from late spring until well into the autumn, when the already plum-soaked leaves join in the party with a display of ruby and bronze. This unique plant was bred in Kyoto by hydrangea fanatic and rock guitarist Mr Ryoji Irie. Winner of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year in 2014.

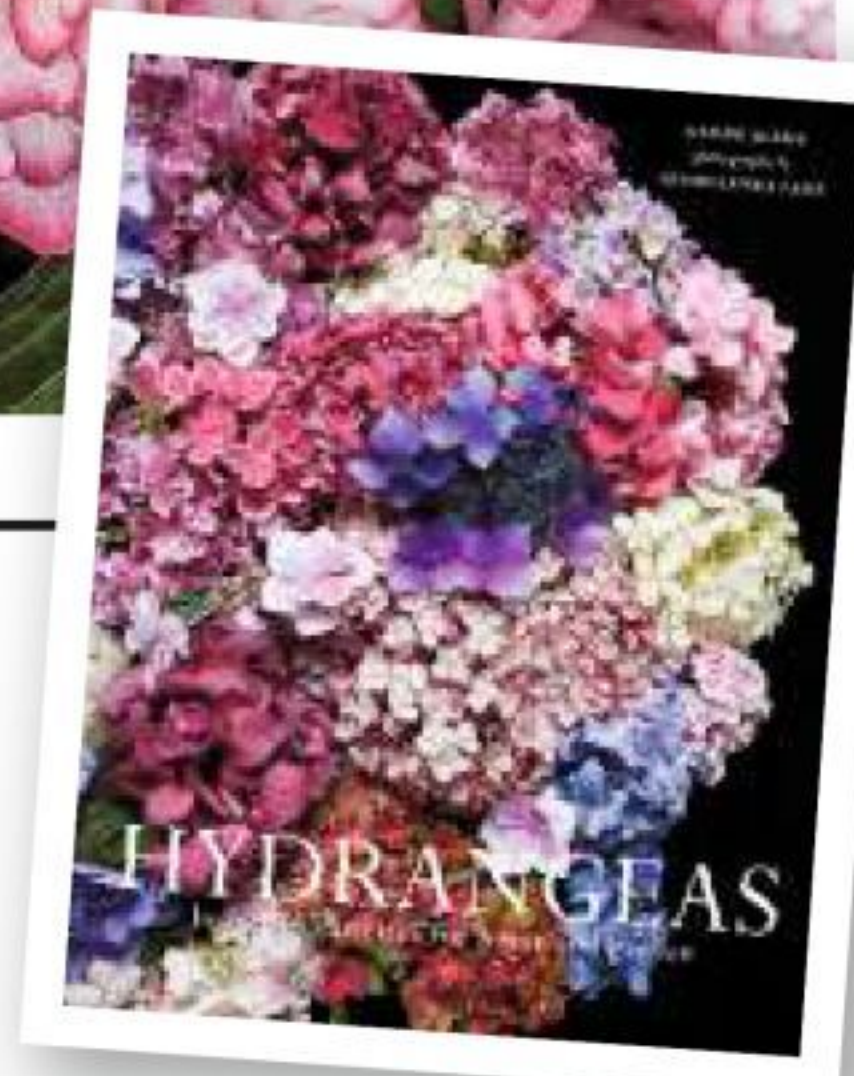
■ **H/S: 1m (3¼ft).**



## How the hydrangea got its name

The name 'hydrangea' is derived from the Ancient Greek words *hydor*, meaning 'water' (and from which comes the root-word *hydr-*, meaning 'pertaining to water', as in 'hydrant') and *angeion*, meaning a container such as a pitcher. People love a good story and are quick to infer meaning, so it's sometimes stated that the name is an indication of the plants' thirsty tendencies and love of moist ground. It is even surmised that the name actually comes from *Hydra*, the snake-haired mythological monster, which the stamens could, with a modicum of imagination, be said to resemble. But the real answer or, at least, the most widely accepted one is that the buds of the flower, before they burst, are the same shape as an ancient Greek vessel that was used to carry water.

Naomi's new book, ***Hydrangeas – beautiful varieties for home and garden***, is out now. Signed copies are available to order directly from her website for £20. Visit **[www.naomislade.com](http://www.naomislade.com)** for more details.



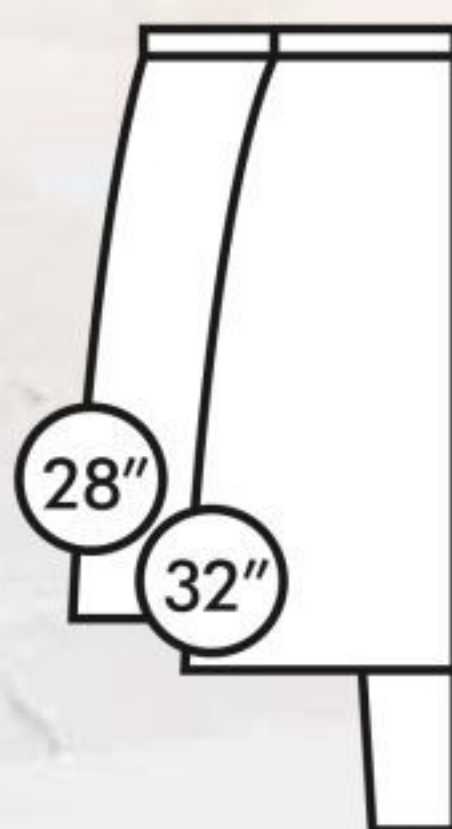


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# Carol Klein THIS WEEK AT GLEBE COTTAGE

The latest from Carol's beautiful cottage garden... plus her diary for the week!

## The thrill of taking CUTTINGS

Getting new plants for free from your old ones is easy and hugely enjoyable – give it a try!

Taking cuttings for the first time is an exciting though sometimes a daunting process.

If cuttings don't take root it can be disappointing but when they do and turn themselves into new plants it's exhilarating.

The first cuttings I ever took were from hydrangeas. Several were successful and were duly potted. Sadly though, they had no protection during the winter (this was the first year here before we had a greenhouse) and although a couple scraped through, sadly the rest died. Since then most

of the cuttings we've taken here have survived and many of the successful results have taken up residence in the garden and themselves provided material to take more cuttings still.

Why grow plants from cuttings? Surely growing from seed is a more straightforward method and gives you many more plants. However, some plants can't be grown from seed; they're sterile and must be reproduced vegetatively and because you're using material from the plant, the new plants will be clones, exact replicas of the parent plant.

Seedlings are all slightly different and though they may take after their parents, there's no guarantee they'll be the same. Cuttings taken from the same plant will be identical.

At this time of year cuttings root rapidly and, with a bit of care and prompt potting on, they may take just a few weeks to make roots and form decent plants. For *BBC Gardeners' World* we recently took a bunch of cuttings from a lovely salvia, 'Wendy's Wish'.



Taking cuttings is simple and effective

It was during hot weather and we were fearful they might wilt and fizzle but with frequent spraying with water we managed to keep them adequately hydrated and were able to show viewers the next stage when they were turned out of their pot, separated and potted up individually.

They've now made fine little plants and because we nipped out their growing tips initially, they've bushed out. It's very tempting to take cuttings from our cuttings but instead I'll pot them on once more and in a few weeks they can go into their final positions, mostly in pots and containers around the gardens.

Meanwhile we've taken more cuttings starting with a few from a white penstemon, when we used both tip cuttings from the first few inches of growth and a couple where we detached sideshoots with a little heel (a slither from the stem to which it was attached). This was filmed for our upcoming new programme for Channel 5, probably entitled *How to Garden*. It was shot entirely at Glebe Cottage by two intrepid director/cameramen and promises to be absolutely beautiful, not to mention informative and inspirational. No dates for transmission have been announced as yet – watch this space!

### WHAT'S LOOKING GOOD NOW

#### *Stipa tenuissima*

Many of the ornamental grasses we grow here look best in specific sites. Miscanthus 'Flamingo', for example, is confined to the raised beds at the bottom of the garden (confined is the wrong word probably as it's encouraged to be itself with its glorious pink plumes). There's one grass, though, which seems to fit in wherever we put it providing it has sun and decent drainage.

*Stipa tenuissima* is a delightful grass with the finest of blades, bright green in young plants. Its inflorescence is soft and fluffy and, as its seed ripens, each flowering head becomes a pale biscuit colour. It's not just the colour that changes but the texture too, as they age they become softer and waftier.

Not only is this the most versatile of grasses, combining perfectly with eryngiums, anemiss and achilleas to mention but a few, but it has therapeutic qualities, too. Most of us have been stressed to some extent recently, but a few minutes stroking this soft grass helps take your

mind off cares and concerns, if only for a short while.

It looks the part in beds and borders but is also the perfect plant for a pot or container – you don't even need a garden. It's evergreen and is constantly replacing its older blades.

Gardeners sometimes have a dilemma about how to keep it looking good. The thing to remember is never to cut it back – it looks worse than a lockdown haircut – just gently pull out any dead fronds and do it regularly. If you want to grow more save seed by pulling finger and thumb nails through seed heads. Sow on the surface of compost in a pot or seed tray, cover with a fine layer of grit and water by standing in a bowl of shallow water.



Stipa becomes softer and waftier as it ages



**'Most of the cuttings we've taken here have survived and many of the successful results have taken up residence in the garden'**

## my gardening **DIARY**

**MONDAY** We've been pruning neglected roses back and planting them out on the far side of our native hedge in a narrow bed reclaimed from the adjacent land. There's already one old rose doing very well there, so we're hopeful.

**TUESDAY** Picking peas is the essence of summer in the veg garden and when you're surrounded by the season's froth and colour, it has to be one of the most satisfying tasks.

**WEDNESDAY** Taking cuttings from pinks just purchased. With dianthus you can either take cuttings where you pull out the top section of a shoot with a few joints or cut below a leaf node. In both cases, cuttings about 10cm (4in) seem to work best.

**THURSDAY** Adding seed-grown perennials to the rough, sloping site at the back of the house. This was a no man's land of couch grass, docks and bindweed but nowadays it's a pleasant, informal bank full of flowers. To gaura, *Digitalis parviflora*, *Knautia macedonica* and sweet rocket we're now adding *Agastache aurantiaca* and *Panicum virgatum*.

**FRIDAY** Sowing more spinach, an Asian variety which purportedly doesn't bolt. The spinach we'd sown in modules and planted out earlier, all ran to seed. We love spinach but perhaps it would be best to use it as a cut-and-come-again crop in modules.

**SATURDAY** The pumpkins we planted as one of the three sisters bed, along with sweetcorn and beans, are really taking off. They'll be clambering out of the raised bed where they're planted if we're not careful. Perhaps it would be a good idea to 'stop' them by pinching out their growing tips.

**SUNDAY** Dean, right, who works here one day a week, made a brilliant job of cutting back the Banksian rose on the front wall of the cottage after that late frost destroyed most of the flower. This pruning has prompted the rose into producing lots of growth – the wall behind it is almost invisible. It needs pruning again!



*Carol Klein*



# Over the FENCE

REAL  
readers'  
gardens!

## I've planted up 36 baskets!

**Derek Brooks**

Prize-winning veg from the allotment and a smaller garden in greater Manchester with impressive summer bedding.



**M**y garden and allotment were more or less weed free but the weeds are beginning to come back as I knew they would. Not many yet but I've been trying to remove them while they're small.

June was mostly about planting; it was the middle of the month before it was finished. I got all the tender veg in, including beans, marrows, courgettes, squashes and sweetcorn. Also dahlias, bedding and the annuals I grow for cutting and showing were planted, as well as the sweet peas. I grow these on the same framework of canes as the runner beans.

I've also planted some spare runner beans at school on the beds that the children used to use. The tomatoes in the polytunnel



I'm planting out my annuals



Two communal allotment tubs

at school are growing well. I keep going up there to tie them up and remove the sideshoots. I gave them their first feed in mid-June.

All my containers have been replanted with geraniums and other bedding plants. I've planted up 36 hanging baskets, 12 for me and the rest for friends and neighbours. There are also four communal containers on the allotments in front of the cabin where we have our meetings.

I've weeded and planted a border alongside the visitor centre at Blackleach Country Park, which I look after. As you can see, the first two weeks of June are my two busiest weeks of the year!

Now all the main planting is finished I've got more time to attend to the plants in the greenhouses, which get a bit



All planting is done under the car port



A spot of summer pruning



Greenhouse salads are growing apace



The border alongside the back lawn is planted



Car port baskets

## Ornaments get a new lease of life

**Irene Garrill**

A sunny garden in Chesterfield that backs onto countryside, with lots of wildlife, a rockery and raised beds.



neglected when I'm busy planting. The plants I'm referring to are fuchsia, geraniums, streptocarpus, begonias and several more.

I've seven cold frames, which I use to harden off tender plants in spring. Four of them are dismantled and put away until next year. I've taken the other three to the allotment to grow carrots in. When the carrots start to grow I cover the frames with mesh to keep out the carrot flies. I sow the seeds into bore holes filled with a fine compost that I've mixed.

*My highlight*

All the main planting is finished and I've more time to enjoy the garden!

**T**he passion for gardening during this lockdown period has allowed my imagination and creative streak to come to the fore. I noticed my garden ornaments had deteriorated over time and



# My pondweed 'fishing trips' are paying off

**Tony McCabe**

**A small garden in Merseyside packed with a variety of different features.**

Water butts are full again after heavy rain – you could almost hear plants saying thank you as the garden received a welcome drink. Not as welcome, sadly, were the unseasonal gale force winds and no matter how you try to take precautions against them, damage always results.

In keeping with our regime of changeovers on the patio, a pot-grown rose (of sentimental value) has now replaced the crinodendron, now taking a rest at the bottom of the garden.

Bedding plants are all settled in, enough for a display in the front garden and a small raised bed in the back, with other bits used as gap fillers in borders. The wayward clematis planted through the mature ivy at the bottom of the garden has at last

got the message and is flowering at a sensible height instead of trying to escape over the top.

My daily 'fishing' expeditions to remove pondweed appear to be successful so far, but I'll keep doing my garden gnome impersonation until none is visible. A couple of rogue bamboo shoots I must have missed during my spring onslaught on the clump in the front have been removed and it looks so far so good.

A tree peony planted over 30 years ago that's always been trouble-free appears to have succumbed to wilt; the job of removal was made a little more bearable with the sight of a few healthy new shoots from ground level, so fingers crossed. Obviously there must be something in the air as the fig on the garage wall has started to drop a few leaves. A little research suggests a lack of water, and this was borne out with the use of a moisture probe; hopefully an easy problem to overcome.

In the greenhouse, the daily picking of strawberries is a delight, and with tomatoes and salad crops growing apace, that lovely 'growing smell' shows summer is here. Now there's no vine to offer shade, man-made mesh shading will have to do for the moment.



**Our bedding display has settled in**

Together with the daily pondweed fishing expedition, a spell of pruning and chipping awaits as a few shrubs require a trim, and then, of course, the enjoyment of a summer garden awaits.



**Finally the clematis is flowering at the right height**



**The raised bed is complete with its bedding display**

*My highlight*  
**The clematis in the ivy behaving itself!**



**Painting flowers and leaves**

needed a makeover. Firstly, I had to source the right paint to do this for use on metal, masonry and slate so I could paint my garden lamps, crocodile, flamingo, stone sculptured lady and slate flowers

and leaves. I managed to get black, white, deep pink, yellow and lime green paint. The conservatory soon became my 'artist's studio'!

The outside garden lamps were the first job. I took them to pieces to clean, including the glass, then painted them with the metallic black. Next was the crocodile, which I painted all over in dark grey. I gave him definition by using a lighter colour to outline his features.

I was loving this new challenge and the flamingo was next. Using a wire brush I removed all the excess rust and was ready to go using a pale-pink paint as the base colour. I experimented with all the colours to add detail to the beak and body. When all the paint had dried, he was screwed back into place on the edge of the middle flower garden.

My favourite garden ornament, 'the lady', was next. She had been

a surprise Christmas present from my partner, Eric, a decade ago. He'd positioned her outside the conservatory window in the snow and had called me to look. I remember being delighted and she's always had pride of place in the centre of the flower bed. I mixed the paint to get an orange colour for her skirt, then did a deep pink midriff with lime-green for the bodice and hat. I used black to outline. When she was eventually finished it was a wonderful feeling seeing her once again. Finally, the slate



**My dark grey crocodile**



**Freshened up lady and right, flamingo**

flowers and leaves were ready to be painted. They're usually screwed onto the concrete edgings of the garden but have become insignificant from lack of colour. I mixed a gold, pink and lime-green to put on the individual flowers and then added detail using black or white.

*My highlight*  
**Painting all the garden accessories; they enhance the garden.**

*Continues over the page*



# Over the FENCE

## My sweet peas raise charity cash



**Karen Gimson**

**Karen grows cut flowers, fruit and veg in her wildlife garden, complete with greenhouse and apolytunnel.**

Sweet peas are providing buckets of flowers to sell each day. I put them in jam jars on the village green, with an honesty box to raise money for Rainbows Hospice for children. I grow highly-scented, old fashioned 'Painted Lady' that dates back to the 1700s, and modern types such as 'Wiltshire Ripple', with a maroon stripe on a white ground, and pink and white 'Mayflower 400', launched this year to celebrate the Pilgrim Fathers' sailing to the New World in 1620.

I made my sweet pea A-frame from hazel rods in February. To maximise space, I've planted gladioli and white calendula 'Snow Princess' down the middle. I help the sweet peas climb by adding offcuts of twisted hazel. This saves time and money as I don't have to use string.

I've got a matching frame for the climbing French beans. I'm growing new variety 'Sunshine.' There are squash plants down the middle and dwarf borlotti beans in front.

I'm harvesting edible peas too. I sowed new variety 'Valido' in seed trays in February on the kitchen windowsill and harvested pea



**Golden iris 'Bengal Tiger'**



**My hazel sweet pea frame works really well**

shoots three times when the stems got to 12cm (4¾in). The shoots taste like peas and can be used in salads and stir fries. I let plants grow on and planted them outdoors in May.

In March, I wrote about creating a 'fedge' around my garden. It's a cross between a fence and a hedge, made from brushwood laid horizontally. Wrens have nested in the twiggy structure and reared two sets of fledglings! Hedgehogs shelter there too, and we've seen four hoglets at dusk. I'm remembering to put out water for them, as it's been dry this summer.

I'm sowing biennials in half seed trays - foxgloves and sweet Williams for next year.

I've ordered organic seed potatoes from Skea Organics, Dundee ([www.potatohouse.co.uk](http://www.potatohouse.co.uk)). Planted in bags the first week of August, we'll



**Picking 'Valido' peas for the dinner plate**



**My dianthus and sweet pea posy**

**I've grown a nice mix of sweet peas this year**

**Sweet pea 'Mayflower'**



**Calendula 'Snow Princess'**

have new potatoes for Christmas. I've joined in with the #GrowSome Sunshine social media campaign by growing sunflowers and donating to the NHS. Sunflowers are good for bees, and seed will provide bird food in winter.

● Read more at [bramblegarden.com](http://bramblegarden.com) and on instagram at [karengimson1](https://www.instagram.com/karengimson1).

### My highlight

**My bucket mini-pond has a gold iris 'Bengal Tiger'. Damselflies land on the flowers - a constant delight.**



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My husband and I often bake my granny's home-made scones, her heavenly chocolate pudding, zingy ginger biscuits, yummy raspberry buns, tasty Madeira cake, and the most delicious bread and butter pudding you've ever tasted. These are just a few of the quick and easy recipes that you will find in the Nostalgic Cookbook. As well as my granny's recipes I have also included other old-fashioned wholesome recipes that during war times kept our workforce both happy and healthy, and kept our soldiers fit to fight in the battlefields!

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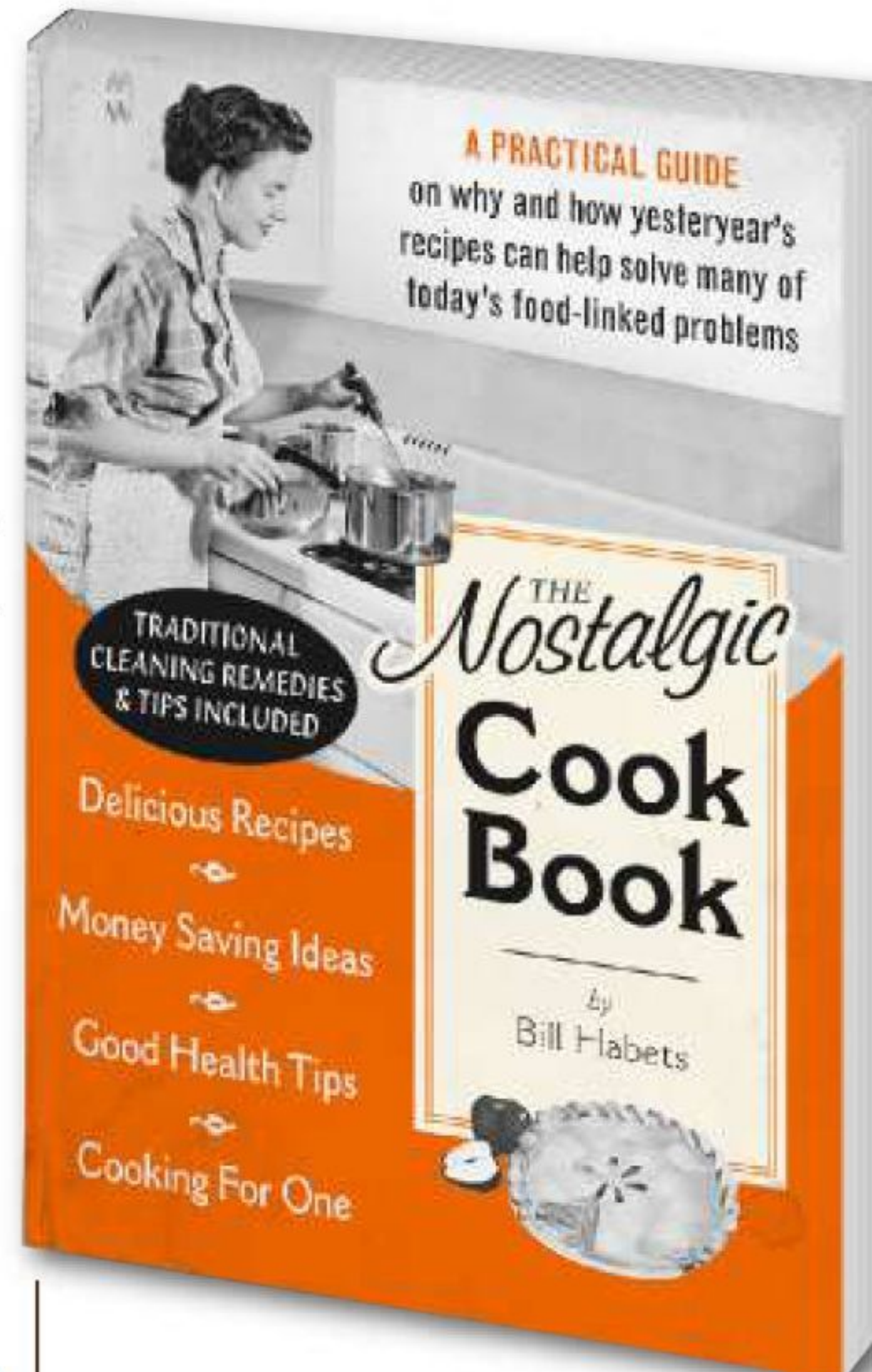
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This book was written to share with you my granny's recipes but also to keep you and your family healthy, whilst saving money... but already we've had many comments

from readers saying that these 'nostalgic' meals have proven immensely popular when cooking for friends or having dinner parties – a great talking point all round!

I am so pleased that my granny's recipes have brought joy to other families, here are some of the comments I have received:

*"I've tried six recipes so far, and my teenage children who normally only want to eat junk food are now pleading with me to try more recipes – extraordinary!"*

Mrs T Maguire, Manchester.

*"I couldn't believe how the memories of my dear old grandmother came flooding back when I read these recipes. They are delicious and so easy and cheap to make ... and it's no wonder she lived until 91!"*

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**Simon Caney**  
Editor

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# What to do THIS WEEK

Meet  
the  
team

Every week our team of experts guide you through what can be done in the garden now.



## Karen Murphy

An all-round gardener, Karen grows fruit, veg and ornamentals and loves wildlife. She's doing the 'Hampton hack'!



## Martin Fish

TV and radio broadcaster Martin explains how to root your strawberry runners and checks dahlia supports.



## Terry Walton

Terry is a best-selling author and star of BBC Radio 2's *Jeremy Vine Show*. He's planting a few bonus crops this week.



## Ian Hodgson

Kew-trained garden designer Ian is interested in all aspects of gardening. This week he harvests peas.



## Rob Smith

Kitchen Gardener Rob this week is working hard to keep crops shipshape now that harvest season is in full swing.



## Medwyn Williams

Medwyn has been awarded 12 gold medals at Chelsea and also has an MBE. This week he experiments with growing carrots.



## Naomi Slade

Gardening writer, editor, author and garden designer Naomi reveals her battle royal taking on slugs and snails!



JOB  
OF THE  
WEEK

## PLANT BULBS FOR AUTUMN FLOWERS

Brighten up the season's russet tones with pops of colour

Think ahead to  
next season's  
flower power!

While it may be strange to think about autumn already, it's the perfect

time to get some autumn colour going. Vivid pinks and sunny yellow aren't normally colours you associate with the russet tints of autumn, but you can dot your garden with these bright shades if you plant a selection of autumn-flowering bulbs now.

Like spring bulbs, autumn bulbs take advantage of a growing window when weather

conditions are mild and moist enough for growth, yet deciduous trees are dropping their leaves, freeing up light for the plants below.

There are autumn equivalents of the spring crocus, including *Crocus speciosus*, and the crocus-like colchicum (also, confusingly, called autumn crocus) and sternbergia. Most stunning is the nerine, flowering in October and November with a starburst of glittering hot pink. Most autumn-flowering bulbs like to be in a hot spot through

summer during their dormant months. For nerines and colchicum especially, choose a sheltered site in front of a south-facing wall or tree. If your soil's heavy, add grit to make the area more free-draining. Nerines don't like to be disturbed, so plan to leave bulbs to bulk up in place for at least a few years.

Plant them shallowly, just below the soil surface. Other bulbs should be planted at two or three times their own depth. Colchicums are very poisonous, so always wear gloves to handle.

### GARDEN NEWS RECOMMENDS



#### *Nerine bowdenii*

The shallow-planted bulbs benefit from a protective winter mulch, after flowering.



#### *Crocus sativus*

The plant that gives us saffron, with tell-tale red-orange stamens inside purple blooms.



#### *Sternbergia lutea*

Golden blooms give it the common name of winter daffodil. Flowers from September to November.



#### *Colchicum* 'Waterlily'

Large bulbs appear as big frilly flowers before any leaves appear.



# What to do **THIS WEEK** In your flower garden

## DO THE 'HAMPTON HACK'!

It will give some of your plants a growing boost and a tidy-up too

**Y**ou may know of the 'Chelsea chop', usually performed mid to late May, around the time the show takes place, to extend the flowering of your early-performing herbaceous plants. The Hampton hack, as you can gather, is a similar practice done around the time the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show is usually held! It's a great way to revitalise tired midsummer borders and encourage a fresh display to last through the rest of the season and beyond.

There are two purposes to it. Firstly, use it on shrubs such as weigela, helianthemum, cistus or philadelphus to rejuvenate them and stop them getting too large and gangly. It will even prolong their life in many cases and see them growing healthily for years. They'll all take quite a hefty prune down. Shrub roses are happy to have their old flowering stems trimmed down now, too, with the main prune, of course, taking place in late winter.

Secondly, it's simply a way of tidying up plants. Border bloomers such as geraniums, alchemilla, astrantias or euphorbias, for example, can have old flowering stems all cut back, and a fresh burst of growth can push on through. Here are a few more to tend to now...



PHOTOS: MARTIN FISH, NEIL HEPWORTH

### GARDEN NEWS RECOMMENDS



#### **Valerian**

Red valerian has been on the go since early spring. Now old flower stems can be cut to the ground.



#### ***Phlomis fruticosa***

Jerusalem sage is a small shrub that doesn't need pruning but will benefit from a tough chop back if it's untidy.



#### **Delphiniums**

After flowering, trim stems to about 30cm (1ft) and mulch. The plant will start into growth again.



#### **Pansies and violas**

Plants get straggly so don't just deadhead, trim them back and they'll come through again.





## CHECK DAHLIA SUPPORTS

Dahlias should now be in full growth and starting to produce flowers which, if picked regularly, will continue until autumn. By late summer the plants will be full size and carrying lots of stems and foliage so it's important to make sure they're properly supported to prevent large sections snapping off due to the weight of the flowers and leaves. This can be done by pushing thick canes or stakes into the ground around the plant and then loop strong string around them at different heights. Ideally do this before the plants get too large and top heavy.

## Cut lavender for drying

Harvesting lavender for drying is a great way to keep bushes neat and compact, while benefiting from the beautifully scented flower stalks. Cut the flowers just as they mature, when they're at their most fragrant. The best time is late morning – after the dew has dried but before the sun draws out the essential oils. Use scissors or snips and cut at the base of the stems. Tie several stems into a bunch with twine and hang upside down in a cool, dark, dry place in your home. Use the dried stems in flower arrangements or strip off the dried buds to make sachets. You can also store them in an airtight jar to decorate or flavour cakes.



## FEED STREPTOCARPUS

With just a little care and attention you can easily keep streptocarpus in flower all summer long, where they'll look great as an indoor pot plant or in a shady greenhouse. The main thing to keep new flowers forming is to regularly pick off all faded flower stems, but you also need to feed to maintain a good balance of nutrients in the compost. A high potash fertiliser such as phostrogen or even tomato feed given once a week will keep foliage green and healthy and promote lots of flower buds through until late September or October.

## Prune out reverted stems

Variegated shrubs help lighten a border and can work well when mixed

with dark greens or other colours of foliage. Occasionally they revert back and for no apparent reason a branch will grow with green leaves. Any such branches should always be cut back when you spot them, because if left they tend to be strong growing and will eventually take over the whole bush! Trace the stem to where there are variegated leaves and make a clean cut.



## CHECK NEWLY PLANTED SHRUBS

It's always good gardening practice to check any newly-planted shrubs during their first summer to make sure they're establishing and making new growth. Until the roots grow down into the soil they can struggle in periods of dry weather, so test the soil around the rootball to make sure it's moist as it can soon dry out in warm, sunny weather. If the soil or old compost in the original pot feels dry, give the ground a soak with water and a half-strength liquid fertiliser to encourage the roots to grow out from the rootball into the surrounding soil.







Naomi Slade

## Notes from a small GARDEN

Follow Naomi's progress as she gets to grips with her tiny urban garden on heavy Bristol clay

# BATTLE ROYAL!

It's time to lay down the gauntlet and see off those pesky slugs and snails

I probably brought it upon myself. A few weeks into lockdown, with all that nice weather and time to spend in the garden, I tweeted proudly that my hostas were looking better than they'd ever done.

But rain and having to take care of business is part of life and, sadly, the perfect foliage hasn't lasted. Worse, long periods of dry followed by intense bursts of rain has had super-hungry slugs and snails making merry while they may; often singling out the extra tasty and juicy plants for emergency hydration.

Slugs and snails are actually pretty clever – tests on snails have shown that they've a homing instinct, so they'll come back if you chuck them into next door's garden. And, night after night, they can follow their own slimy trails back to any particularly delicious and vulnerable plants that they're hell-bent on shredding.

The richer the environment, the larger the population of slugs,

snails and almost anything else, that it will support. Which in real terms means that the more things I plant, the more snails I'll get – but I hopefully will also get frogs and thrushes and many other beasts of beauty.

Chomp mightily though they might, I can't bring myself to hurt them. They're just going about their business as I'm going about mine. And, when I think about the barren space I inherited, these large, handsome snails are more a badge of success than a mark of failure. So, the thing to do is dissuade them from decimating the plants that I want to enjoy – primarily hostas and dahlias at the moment, though they've had a go at a lobelia and even a hydrangea before. And I particularly want to protect those varieties that seem more vulnerable to mollusc attack than others. So I've added some Grazers G2 formula ([www.grazers.co.uk](http://www.grazers.co.uk)) to my armoury, and this works by making the

plants taste nasty while not harming the slugs or the environment. You're supposed to apply it proactively, rather than reactively, which admittedly I've not done, but hopefully it'll provide enough protection for the plants to recover and do their summer thing and, discovering that dahlias leave a bitter taste in their mouths, the slimy beasts will wander off and find something else to eat.



I'm waging (friendly) war on my mollusc nemesis

Snails have been very happy to find my hostas!



## Make new plants

July's not always thought of as a prime month for propagation, but there are still plenty of things that are ripe for multiplying if you put your mind to it. Softwood cuttings from plants such as mint, thyme, lavender, rosemary and salvias will take easily now – mint and salvias will often grow roots in a glass of water if you want to see the magic in action. There are also seeds that can be sown around now and I'm going to get going with verbascum 'Snowy Spires' and echinacea 'Sundress', which by this time next year should be looking pretty jolly glorious!

Verbascum 'Snowy Spires'



Echinacea 'Sundress'







Terry Walton

## Tales from the ALLOTMENT

Star of BBC Radio 2's *Jeremy Vine Show* and best-selling author. His allotment sits in the Rhondda Valley

# THERE'S PLENTY OF SUMMER LEFT...

Some crops have been harvested early, so that leaves space for some bonus planting now!

**T**his is the year that tried and trusted gardening methods have become redundant. No point relying on the good old seed packet for instructions either. Mother Nature has set her own agenda and sent the season into a topsy-turvy mood!

Having started earlier than usual with sowing and planting, lulled on by the warm April sun, everything leapt ahead and grew

on at too fast a pace. Then it was downhill from there and all of the growing plants were left in a very confused state, along with many experienced gardeners.

This has resulted in some harvests being finished well ahead of schedule, with large areas of ground becoming vacant. But don't waste these pieces of land as, theoretically, there's still a lot of summer



Broad beans have been a seasonal treat for many dinners

yet to come. The broad bean crop has been filling dinner plates and the excesses stored away in plastic bags in the freezer for winter months.

This has made some good ground available for members of the brassica family. The roots of the broad bean are covered in little nodules, rich in nitrogen.



In go the cabbages!

Don't dig them up, cut them to ground level and leave the root in place. Clean between the roots and plant cabbages between them. This will give them a good start in life with a nitrogen 'fix'.

Alan arrived at the plot last week with an unusual plant he'd bought in a local store. 'What do you have there?', we asked. 'It's a kiwi fruit bush,' he replied. We all looked at the label and said, 'you can't plant that here'. 'Why' he asked. 'It says plant in a sunny position; where are you going to find that in the Rhondda Valley?'

There's always a quip or two flying around the plots and that's what makes it such a happy place to be!



Swede is growing well on the plot

## How to get lush leeks

The rest of the summer crops are doing well despite the weird weather, but thoughts are already turning to food for the dark winter months. The swedes look healthy and should make super-size crops. Leeks are also growing on strongly and now's the time I cover some of them up. I like the long white part of the leek best, so to get extra long white pieces I cheat a little. I've 30 or

so pieces of duct pipe of about 7.5cm (3in) diameter and cut into 15cm (6in) lengths. I thread these over the tops of the leeks and push 2.5cm (1in) into the ground. This means I've 10cm (4in) of leek below ground and 12.5cm (5in) blanched above the ground. When these are harvested in autumn I remove the tube and there I have 23cm (9in) of pure white leek. Just as I like them!



Covering leeks with duct pipe means I get extra white parts of the crop

PHOTOS: TERRY WALTON



# What to do **THIS WEEK** On your fruit & veg plot



## ROOT YOUR STRAWBERRY RUNNERS

Then grow these on for more fruiting plants next year

**F**reshly picked strawberries warmed by the sun are delicious and well worth growing in the garden. Early crops can be grown undercover in pots and the main crop outside if you can protect them from birds.

Although easy to grow, the life of a strawberry plant isn't that long and after three seasons starts to lose vigour and produce a smaller crop. To grow new plants

you can root some of the runners that are produced after the fruits have been picked. Only propagate from existing plants that are healthy and producing quality berries. Any weak plants not producing much fruit or that look virused with mottled foliage shouldn't be used.

The long runners are the strawberry plant's natural way of spreading and if left to do their own thing a single plant

will soon form a carpet of growth. When raising new plants, select a number of healthy runners and peg them down into pots or the soil to root. Often a runner will have several small plantlets along its length, but the largest one closest to the parent is the best to root and all others beyond it should be removed. Once runners have a good root system they can be detached and grown on for next year.

### TOP TIPS



**1** Select strong, healthy runners and trim the long stem back to the first runner nearest the main plant.



**2** If growing outside in the garden, fork over some soil and push the runner into the soil and peg down.



**3** Or you can root runners into small pots filled with multi-purpose compost. One runner per pot is pegged down.



**4** Finally, if you have more than one variety of strawberry, make sure you label them to prevent any mix ups!

PHOTOS: NEIL HEPWORTH, MARTIN FISH, SHUTTERSTOCK





## LIFT ONIONS

Once onion tops turn yellow, it's a sign the bulbs are ripening, and when they turn brown and bend over, your crops are ready to harvest. It's best to lift them in the morning when temperatures aren't too hot. Dig around the plants carefully with a fork and pull them up, keeping the tops intact. Gently shake excess soil from the bulbs and leave them to dry thoroughly for two to three weeks, spread out on a clean, dry surface in an airy garage or shed.

## Pinch out and train squash

Scrambling squash plants can be left to roam across a rich, fertile soil, where they'll root into the ground as they grow, or trained to a trellis or archway to create a decorative feature. Plants trained on to a vertical structure produce fewer fruits because they won't grow additional roots in the soil, but will take up less ground space. Keep tying in the trailing stems to create a neat, ornamental feature and keep the base of the plants well watered. For plants growing in soil, apply a mulch of grass clippings or well-rotted compost to lock in moisture and provide additional nutrients. Pinch out the stems once they reach 60cm (2ft).



## NEATEN UP TOMATO PLANTS

It's around now that tomato plants are growing at an alarming rate and will get gangly unless you keep them in check. Tie in stems to a sturdy cane support frequently or plants will get top heavy and snap. To stop a tangle of stems happening, continue to pinch out sideshoots in the 'armpits' between the leader stem and the main sidestems.



## HARVEST PEAS

**Keep checking your peas and, unless you're growing sugar snap or mange touts, pods should be well-filled and plump. Don't leave it too long between harvests or the pods will get old and tough. Sugar snaps or mangetout should, as a guide, be picked at around 7.5cm (3in) long. It pays to harvest frequently as if you don't, the plant will stop producing flowers and pods and will give up.**

## FEED AND MULCH RUNNER BEANS

Runner beans should now be in full growth, with plenty of flowers forming and tender beans developing. To get a good crop of beans through summer the plants need plenty of water and feed. An easy way to do this is to give a liquid feed once a week around the base of the plants to keep the soil moist. A high potash tomato fertiliser or liquid seaweed is ideal for this. Once the ground is moist, to help seal in the moisture and keep the roots cool, apply a mulch of fresh grass clippings or home-made compost.





**ROB SMITH**

# KITCHEN GARDENER

Helping you get your best-ever fruit and veg

## Perfect peas but beastly blight!

It's a full-time job keeping my crops shipshape now harvest time is here

As more plants begin to crop in the kitchen garden it can become a full-time job just to harvest your veg at the peak of perfection! That said, we sometimes think 'I'll leave it a few more days as I don't need it now', but don't, as you run the risk of your cauliflowers bolting or your peas going like bullets.

I've been growing a couple of heritage



**KITCHEN GARDENER**  
**Rob Smith**

Winner of *The Big Allotment Challenge* and a seed guardian for the Heritage Seed Library

varieties of pea from the Heritage Seed Library, with 'Blue Prussian' fast becoming a favourite, with its sweet and crisp taste that far surpasses more modern varieties (in my humble opinion). This short variety produces lovely white flowers and is rather productive from just

10 plants grown around a small support. I harvest the pods when they feel full (eating a handful on the way back to the kitchen!).

It's also time to harvest the spring-sown broad beans - these are best picked when you can feel the bean inside the pod and are great to freeze for later use, but I like to blanch them and add them to salads with a garlic dressing. As both peas and beans begin to finish cropping I like to chop them off at ground

**Checking over tatties for blight**

level and leave the roots in the soil due to the fact they trap nitrogen from the air in nodules on their roots and this can help feed your next crop. There won't be a huge amount of nitrogen in the roots as the plants will have used a lot of it, but what little there is can be worked into the soil by chopping the roots up with a sharp spade and working it into the bed.

As shallots become ready to harvest you'll notice the leaves begin to yellow and droop, while

the bulbs become more visible and the skins start to go papery and brown. Choose a sunny day to lift and divide them, trim the roots and stalks and allow them to dry on the surface of the soil for a few hours. I then keep them in a breezy, dry place such as a greenhouse or lean-to until they're dry and ready to store in net sacks until needed, or pickle them for Christmas.

As we had quite a lot of cool, damp weather over the last few weeks before the sun finally came, I've been checking my potato and outside tomatoes for signs of

**Planting out more lettuce plugs**



### FEEDING TRICKS FOR FRUIT

It's a good time to give fruiting plants a high potash feed every few weeks as the fruit begins to ripen, especially raspberries and berry plants, as this will improve the harvest by producing bigger berries, and more of them. However, if your raspberries are becoming yellow on the new growth or in between the

leaf veins, this can be a symptom of iron deficiency and you should use a foliar feed containing chelated iron, whereas if they're yellowing on the older leaves this is a sign of magnesium deficiency and can be solved by spraying with a solution of 50g Epsom salts in one litre of water every two weeks for six weeks.

**Raspberries get a big boost now**







Winston's been caught bean-lifting!

A good crop of broad beans with thick pods

PHOTOS: DARREN LAKIN

blight; this can decimate plants within 24 hours of first noticing the dark patches on the leaves.

Potatoes can be salvaged by removing the foliage at ground level as soon as you notice the problem as the tubers will be fine, but it's 'game over' for outdoor tomatoes if they aren't ripe. You can register on [www.blightwatch.co.uk](http://www.blightwatch.co.uk) for free and they'll alert you if blight could be around in your postcode area.

There's still time now to plant out late varieties of Brussels sprouts and leek seedlings, as well as sowing and planting lettuce. I like to sow a few seeds into modules every other week so I have a constant supply of seedlings to plant. I sow into modules as pigeons and slugs decimate any germinating lettuce seedlings that are directly sown at this time of year.

**NEXT WEEK** Picking and planting potatoes, and mulching crops



medwyn williams

## GROWING FOR SHOWING

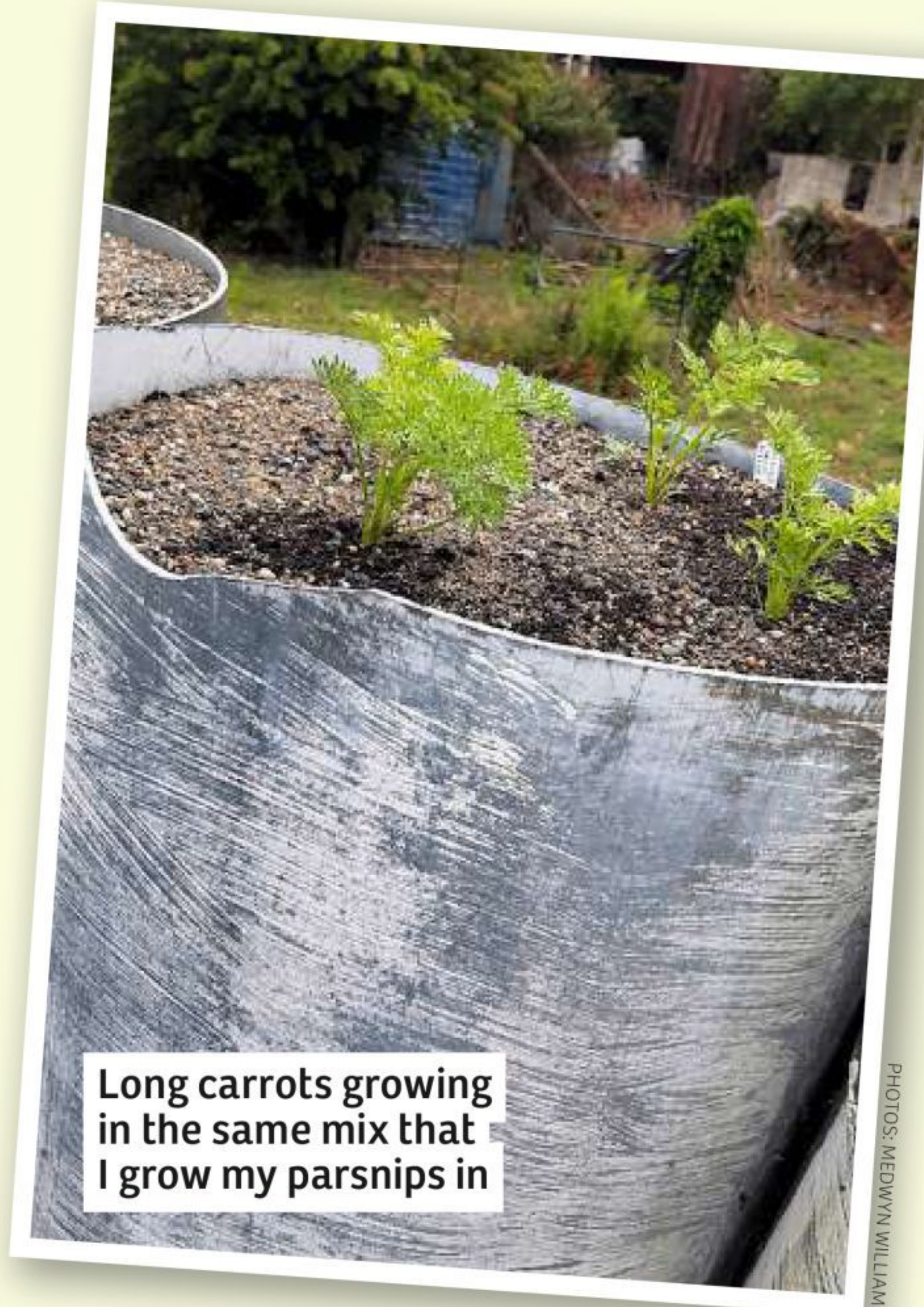
# Giving my veg growing a mix-up

**I'm experimenting with trying some long carrots in the parsnip compost mix**

Some years ago now I won some grey-coloured, large, plastic pipes at a farmers' auction. They're 38cm (1¼ft) in diameter and I cut them down to 1.2m (4ft) lengths. I've regularly grown my parsnips for the Malvern Autumn Show in these.

I've 20 of these sitting on a slightly raised bed, all filled with concreting sand. They're positioned in full sun and have produced some excellent roots. However, after a couple of years I noticed that the pipes were getting quite hot on sunny days, so I painted them all white with emulsion paint, which went some way towards keeping the sand cooler.

I sow the parsnips for Malvern during mid to late March and always get nice clean, long specimens by the end of September. For those of you aiming for a mid-August show next year then you really need to get them



Long carrots growing in the same mix that I grow my parsnips in

PHOTOS: MEDWYN WILLIAMS

sown earlier, around the middle of February, weather permitting.

This year I cored out four holes in each down to 1.67m (5½ft). I fill all the holes with my usual parsnip mix which contains some soil at the ratio of 10-litres to a 75-litre bag of Levington F2S. As an experiment this year I sowed some 'Victor' F1 as well as 'Viking' F1, with the latter fast becoming my favourite owing to the whiteness of the skin. I also sowed three barrels of long carrots in the same bore hole mix just to see how they'll perform.

Currently the carrots seem to be thriving in the parsnip mixture, looking sturdy and strong, although I do have strong reservations regarding their condition, particularly the skin finish when I lift them. I shall let you know how they perform.

**■ Why not follow me on Twitter throughout the season as I grow vegetables for my display at Malvern - @medwynsofangles.**



'Viking' F1 parsnip is my favourite to show

Medwyn has been awarded 12 Chelsea golds and an MBE!



# GARDENING WITH THE EXPERTS

The world's finest share their tips for success

This week...

- Begonias
- Dahlias



Our begonia display especially for Garden News readers

## A socially-distanced event!

Join our begonia expert for an exclusive flower show just for Garden News readers

As all our shows are cancelled until next year and our personal growing year is formed around exhibiting at these events, on these pages this week we're offering you an exclusive flower show!

We hope you'll get as much pleasure looking at our display as we did staging it. Happiness is plant shaped for us!

This display (above) is 1.2m (4ft) wide and deep. My staging is of wood, pre-formed flat pack and is erected by slotting it together without the need of screws or nails, easy to put up and equally easy to remove after the show. The wood frame is covered



### Samuel Kennedy

Samuel Kennedy and his wife Elizabeth co-ordinate the Botanical Begonia Growers as a service for people who want to source information on how to grow begonias. They exhibit at the Ayr and District Flower Show in Scotland and Harrogate Flower Shows each year. They were awarded the Queen Mother Medal in Horticulture for their work with begonias in Scotland by the Royal Horticultural Caledonian Society in 2014.

from small-flowered varieties. The use of adiantum ferns complements the arrangement without being overpowering or detracting from the use of the plant.

### Ayr Flower Show 2015

This was an entry in 2015 for the Ayr Flower Show, with another style of display, again all begonias with the addition of a few adiantum ferns, which were allowed in the show schedule (always read the show schedule). This display uses no tuberous begonias as the schedule stated 'begonia species and its hybrids'.



Our display at Ayr Flower Show in 2012

with black Phormisol ground cover to prevent light showing through the exhibit, especially if the exhibit is staged against a marquee wall. The light detracts from the beauty of the plants for both the viewing public and photography.

We've used the following types of begonia classified types: shrub, bush, thick stem, cane, rex, rhizomatous, semperfloren and tuberous.

Here are a few tips on displaying begonias from other flower shows we've exhibited at.

### Ayr Flower Show 2012

This group uses all tuberous begonias, with no large-flowered doubles or garden double-flowered types. This demonstrates that you can make a pleasing display



Begonias on display at Ayr in 2015



## CARE OF BEGONIAS

- Grow in a greenhouse or conservatory that is light and airy with good ventilation.
- Try to avoid a drastic change in day and night temperatures which can cause the perfect conditions for dreaded mildew.
- On hot, sunny days shading is needed and, if possible, remove on dull and cold summer days, maximising the light available to plants.
- Feed regularly with a liquid plant food, using high nitrogen for spring and summer feeding and then change to a high potash feed from autumn into winter.



Begonia  
'Irene Nuss'

### Begonia 'Irene Nuss'

Begonia 'Irene Nuss' is a cane variety, the young foliage is lighter in colour and, as you can see, heavily patterned. The young growth also bears the flower panicles which come from the leaf axels. When exhibiting cane varieties, prepare the plant by removing the old calyx leaves which turn brown and adhere to the stems at every leaf axel as they detract from the plant.



### Begonia rex Cultorum Group 'Rochart'

Begonia 'Rochart' is easy to grow and a good specimen for the show bench. When staging three plants at a flower show take along additional clean pots, as these can be used to stage the plants

in a diamond shape as shown where the plants at the rear are elevated, giving immediate impact to the exhibit.



Stopping means you remove the growing tip of the plant

# Demystifying stopping and double stopping

Understand this process to get the most from your dahlias

Stopping is the term we use when the growing tip of the plant is removed. This can be just the very tip or the removal of the tip and one or two leaf joints as well. Double stopping is the same process, but then you carry out another stop two to four weeks later. The laterals that are produced from the first stop are then pinched back to one or more pairs of leaves on each shoot.



### Dave Gillam

A grower for 25 years, in 2012 Dave won National Individual Champion awards at each of the English (Shepton Mallet), Welsh and Scottish National Dahlia Society competitions, the first time this has ever been accomplished. He's very busy on YouTube, where you'll find dozens of videos on how to grow dahlias.



Double stopping is pinching back the laterals that form after the first stop

A dahlia plant will continue to grow upwards until it produces a bud. This, in effect, is the plant's way of stopping itself. If you wait for the plant to do it, you may well get one early flower, but the following flowers will be produced much later than you would like.

By stopping a plant you can make sure the plant produces its flowering stems from lower down in the plant, making it a more compact, strong and stable plant. You can, with some trial and error, control the flowering time of the plant for a show or special occasion.

Stopping is one thing that people new to growing dahlias find hard to bring themselves to do as they fear they'll damage the plant. Trust me, the worst that can happen is you hesitate too much and do it too late and your plant will then flower later than you would like.

Any time from early June to early July is fine and depends what stage your plant is at as far as when you can do it. As long as you're leaving three or four pairs of leaves on the plant, it's good to do it any time you can. Remember, the earlier you do it the sooner you'll have that display you have been hoping for!





# THE PROBLEM SOLVER

## Stefan Buczacki

Professor Buczacki is a horticultural expert, writer and former chair of *Gardeners' Question Time*

Got a problem? Our Problem Solver can help! See our contact details on page 3 **#GNASKTHEEXPERTS**



There's no harm in growing flowers among your veg

## What flowers can I grow with my veg to deter pests?

**Thomas Moug, by email**

**Stefan says:** There's little or no scientific evidence that the actual presence of flowers or anything else such as garlic, which is often suggested, has a deterrent effect on pests. The theory is that some chemicals are given off by the plants to produce a pest-controlling action, but if you think about it, the effect of the wind and open air must mean that anything, even if it existed, would instantly be diluted and blown away.

The only possible example I'm aware of is that the roots of some species of tagetes produce a chemical that has some deterrent

effect on certain eelworms (nematodes) in the soil, but that's an exception.

But having said this, if you look at my own kitchen garden you'll see flowers scattered among the vegetables. They're mostly calendulas, which self-seed every year. So why are they there? For two reasons. First because they look really attractive and second because bright orange or yellow-coloured flowers are good at attracting insects and among these insects will be ladybirds and hoverflies that, directly or indirectly (as adults or larvae), may have some value in diminishing some pests,

aphids especially. But the key word is 'some'; it doesn't guarantee my vegetables are aphid-free, although it does help.

You also ask about growing carrots with lettuce. You can grow anything with anything and I do in my garden.

You'll find some carrots close to lettuce, potatoes close to kale, rocket alongside beans and so on. This is because the area I devote to my kitchen garden is relatively small and not large enough for me to operate a truly strict three-course rotation, which scientifically is

Calendulas attract hoverflies and ladybirds



certainly the ideal. For pest and disease limitation, having three more or less equal areas devoted to root crops, to brassicas and to peas and beans and swapping them year by year is certainly desirable; with lesser crops like lettuce fitted in here and there.

### FOUR MORE WAYS TO CONTROL PESTS NATURALLY



#### Regular inspections

Keeping a good watch on your crops and picking off any pests as soon as you see them can go a long way to prevent an infestation.



#### Water off with the hose

A good blast with the hose should help remove any pests if you have more than you can pick off by hand.



#### Cover with nets

Put nets over brassicas to prevent pigeons eating them and butterflies laying eggs on them which hatch into caterpillars.



#### Set traps

Earwigs can be trapped by filling pots with straw and balancing them upside down on sticks. Just empty the pots each morning.



# Should I wear a mask and gloves at the allotment because of Covid-19?

**Garry O'Sullivan,**  
Hillingdon, London

**Stefan says:** You're right to be cautious. However, there's no need to wear a mask in the open air at your allotment, although you must wear one if you travel to it on public transport. It's sensible to also wear one at the garden centre, too.

You only need wear disposable gloves if you're sharing tools with someone else, which in any event I'd discourage you from doing. But you and your fellow allotment holders must maintain social distancing, which the Government has now reduced from 2m (6½ft) to 1m (3¼ft) plus.

Everyone must play their part now the virus is in decline to ensure it doesn't flare up again. And it's perfectly safe to carry on growing your own vegetables in the usual way.



You might want to wear a mask if you go to the garden centre

# The leaves of my *Acer palmatum* look scorched

**Jonathan Owen,**  
by email

**Stefan says:**

The ornamental Japanese and North American types of acer make wonderful plants for growing in pots, but there are considerations you need to be aware of. They're intolerant of waterlogging and moderately intolerant of drying out, both of which mean that watering must be done carefully. They also need occasional feeding. Next, they're intolerant of wind and this means the container must be sited carefully, not in a wind tunnel between two buildings for example. All of these factors, plus a late frost, very hot sun or chemical spray can result in the leaves having a scorched appearance.



Scorched acer leaves may be due to wind or sun damage



Crown imperials bloom better in deep, well-drained loam soils

# Why did our new pot-grown crown imperials fail to flower?

**Heather Walton,** by email

**Stefan says:** It's common for crown imperials (*Fritillaria imperialis*) to flower in the first year but then struggle to flower after that. On a deep, well-drained loam they're more reliable, but on heavier or light soils they often have to be regarded as an expensive annual.

Possibly yours failed to flower the first year due to planting too late. They're best in the ground in September, in time to make root growth before the winter. Deep planting, at least 20cm (8in) down

is best and ideally deeper. They also need adequate water at this time and in pots they could simply be too dry. In my experience they're better in the open ground.

A handful of Vitax Q4 scattered round each bulb as they begin to shoot in spring is ideal as is the occasional liquid tomato feed. Allow foliage to die back naturally and then pull it away. Then lift a bulb or two to check their size. If they're too small, they're unlikely to flower the following year.

# Will foxgloves come true from seed or should I take cuttings?

**Pam Ringrose,**  
Oadby, Leicester

**Stefan says:** I can see you've a small collection of these lovely foxgloves, which appear to be a biennial variety and therefore presumably produce seeds. Whether they'll come true would depend on the parentage of the variety and whether there are other types growing nearby to cross-pollinate. But it will certainly be worthwhile trying and you may turn up something equally lovely.

I've a gardener friend who ruthlessly pulls out all purple foxgloves from her garden as soon as she sees the flower colour and has managed to maintain a population of all-white plants for many years. You also ask about cuttings. I've

succeeded by cutting off the base of each leaf stalk where you will find a small cluster of leaves. I planted these and found they rooted easily.



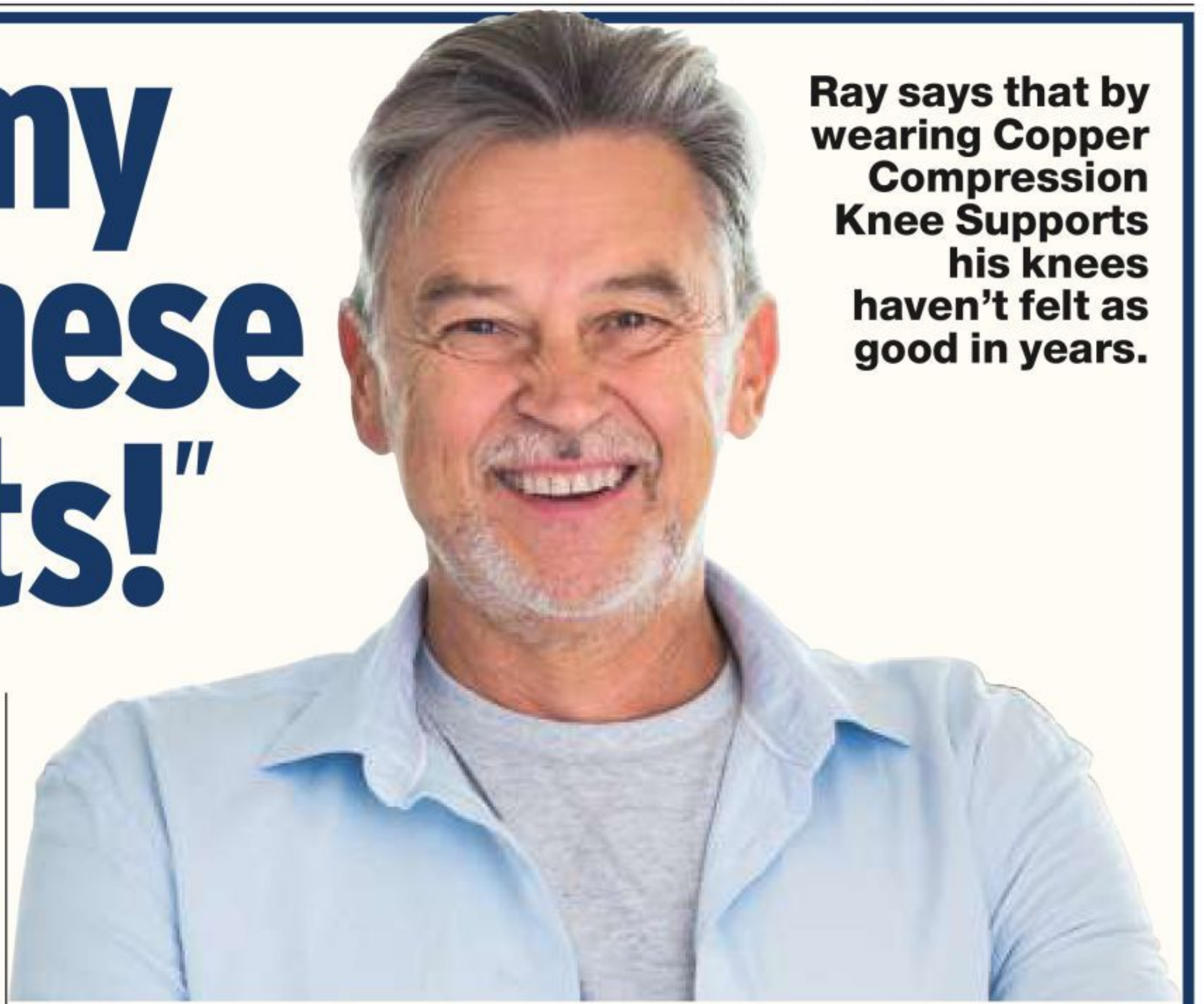
It's worth collecting seed from foxgloves to see if they'll come true to type

*Continues over the page*



# "I used to suffer with my knees, until I found these Copper Knee Supports!"

Ray says that by wearing Copper Compression Knee Supports his knees haven't felt as good in years.



**R**AY HAS BEEN a stone-mason for almost 40 years, but the job has taken its toll on his knees.

"I love my job, I get to meet all kinds of people and get huge satisfaction seeing the customers reaction when I have finished a job. I am on my knees a lot, but never had any problems until about 2 years ago. Since then the pain got worse and worse and it made my job an absolute nightmare. It also affected my home life as well, getting up and down stairs was painful, I gave up tennis, and didn't want to go anywhere where I had to walk far.

My wife Jayne finally persuaded me to make an appointment with my GP. He sent me for a scan and it was no surprise that I had arthritis in both knees and the cartilage

had completely worn away. It was no wonder that I had been in so much pain. The consultant told me that if they got any worse I would need both knees replaced. This was the last thing I wanted to hear, the thought of having a knee op terrified me.

"I realised I had to stop working and to take early retirement, to avoid any more damage. This caused sleepless nights worrying about our finances as I'd always been the bread winner. Jayne did bits of sewing for extra cash but now she was working all hours, day and night just to make ends meet.

I was at the end of my tether on what to do, even if I had the op, there was no guarantee I'd be able to return to work. So I made it my mission to find another solution!

I decided to go for physio, it wasn't cheap, but thought it was worth a go. Whilst waiting in reception I noticed a guy in his forties sitting opposite me wearing two knee supports. I asked "I see you are here for your knees as well?." He laughed "No, my knees are great now, I am here for my back, I had a bad fall skiing". I was intrigued, why was he wearing knee supports, and how can anyone with bad knees go skiing. He noticed me looking at his knee supports, he said "I used to suffer with my knees, from years of football. I tried everything, but then I found these Copper Compression Knee Supports.

I wear them if I get a niggle or when I need extra support". "And you ski in them?" I asked. He did! "Yes, and for playing football, even though

10 years ago they said I'd never play again!"

He gave me the details of where to get them so I ordered them straight away. I couldn't wait for them to arrive, checking the post everyday! Two days later the wait was over. They were easy to pull onto my knees and felt very comfortable. Thankfully they were thin enough to wear under my jeans. I wore them around the house and in the garden. The compression feels like its supporting the knee, and for the first time in months I didn't feel like my knee was

going to give way. Fast forward four months, I wear them most days and my knees haven't felt this good in years. No more knee pain. A month ago I started back at work, taking on a few jobs. No huge projects, but I feel like my old self again and it's good to be earning again and to take the pressure off Jayne. I'd recommend these to anyone with knee pain."

**The Copper Compression Knee Support is available exclusively from UK Direct Shop. You can order on their freephone number 0808 156 4998.**

## "It gave me immediate relief."



**F**IVE years ago Penny Jones life changed totally after she fell down the last few steps of her stairs. She landed badly on her knee and all her problems started from there.

She had just turned 65, was busy with her three grandchildren, very involved with her church and also ran a support group for young mums. She was out of the house most days jumping from one activity to the next. That all changed after her fall.

Her knee swelled up like a balloon and never really went down again! After months of going back and forth to the doctor it was

finally decided she needed a knee replacement.

Whilst she waited for the operation she became virtually house bound and even had to move her bed downstairs. This was a very dark time for an active lady like Penny and the only thing she longed for was her knee op so she could get back to her old life again.

But it didn't turn out as she planned. The operation had complications and afterwards she found that her knee had lost a huge range of movement, it was just as sore as before and was twice the size of her other one! This went on for a year despite diligently doing all her physio and exercises.

Then one day her husband Terry saw a advert for a Copper Knee Support. He had always worn a copper bracelet and swore by it, so he bought the knee support hoping it would help her.

That's when her life changed for the better. The support gave Penny immediate relief. In the first few days it helped reduce the swelling which in turn improved the stiffness and then the pain started to diminish too.

That was two months ago and she is now back to her old self again, running her support group, back to all her old Church activities and best of all she can take her grandchildren for days out again.

## "Much less pain..."



**W**ALKING BECAME so painful and going down stairs was excruciating. My knees got so bad that I began to rely on a walking stick to get around. Then I read an article in a magazine for the Copper Knee Support. I'd always thought knee supports were used just for sports, I never thought they could help with walking. But I guess

it's all about being able to have flexibility and support. I thought at the very least they would take some of the pressure off my knees, but they offer so much more. I wear them under my nylons and I've noticed a huge difference, much less pain and I've not used my walking stick at all."

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# THE PROBLEM SOLVER

## What's the strange object growing in my hedge?

Chris Bridge, by email

**Stefan says:** This hard object with an uneven surface is a crown gall and it's relatively common on many types of shrub, tree and fruit. They're caused by bacteria from the soil that are splashed upwards and can occur in a different, soft and fleshy form on perennials and annuals even including some vegetables. I've seen them on tomatoes and brassicas.

Sometimes, when they're growing on trees, they may be enormous, 1m (3¼ft) or more in diameter. The obvious question is do they do any harm? To which the answer is no, despite their dramatic and disfiguring appearance.



Crown gall looks alarming, but it isn't harmful



There's been a problem with pollination if flowers fail to form pods

## Why are broad beans full of flowers but no seed pods?

Roger Chance, Garndiffaith, Pontypool

**Stefan says:** It must be because they aren't being pollinated, but it's not obvious why this would happen because broad beans are mainly self-pollinating. Insects do play an important part and certainly can cross-pollinate between different plants and varieties.

I'm going to make two suggestions. It could be that the pollen was killed, possibly because of very hot weather at a critical time,

in which case watering or misting the plants might have helped. The other possibility is that the conditions were unsuitable for insects; perhaps it was too windy.

Pollination of all types of plants is a fascinating process and in many cases - broad beans are just one example - notionally self-pollinating plants are assisted by insect activity to produce a much heavier crop.

## Quick QUESTIONS

What's this plant growing in my garden?

Alison Noble, by email

**Stefan says:** You don't say if this is growing wild or a plant you cultivate but it's mallow, *Malva sylvestris*, an attractive native species that quite often finds its way in to gardens, presumably when birds drop the seeds. There are several closely-related cultivated varieties.



Mallow is an easy-growing native plant

Do my 'Tigrella' tomatoes need sideshooting?

David Bentley, Stockport

**Stefan says:** Yes, the striped tomato variety 'Tigrella' is what's known as an indeterminate or cordon variety and you must remove the sideshoots to make sure you get the best crop. By contrast, the determinate or bush varieties don't need sideshooting.

What's the white fluff that has appeared on a small shrub in my garden?

Linda Whinney, Norwich

**Stefan says:** It's a sap-sucking pest called a scale insect. Under the woolly protective covering are masses of tiny, scale-like creatures. It may be possible to obtain some control with an approved systemic insecticide, but it's difficult when the infestation is severe.

Lily beetles devastate plants in the lily family



## There are little piles of black 'dirt' on my lilies

Jenny Goucher, by email

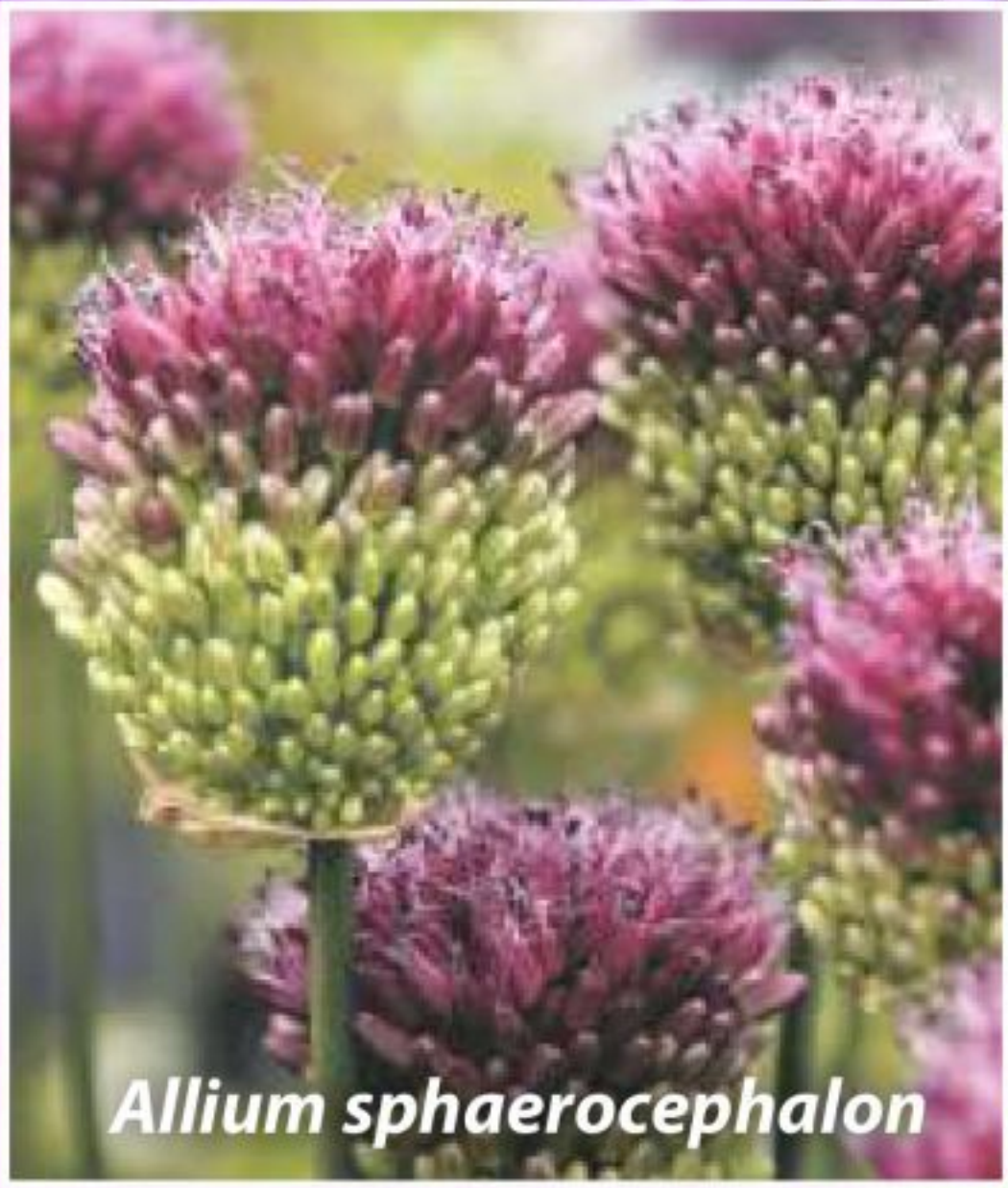
**Stefan says:** You've found one of the most significant new flower pests to arrive in this country in recent years. The 'dirt' is actually the wet black excrement (or frass) of the larvae of the bright red lily beetle which has now spread far and wide. Control is not easy but try picking them off by hand or spraying with an approved contact insecticide.

## READER HOTLINE

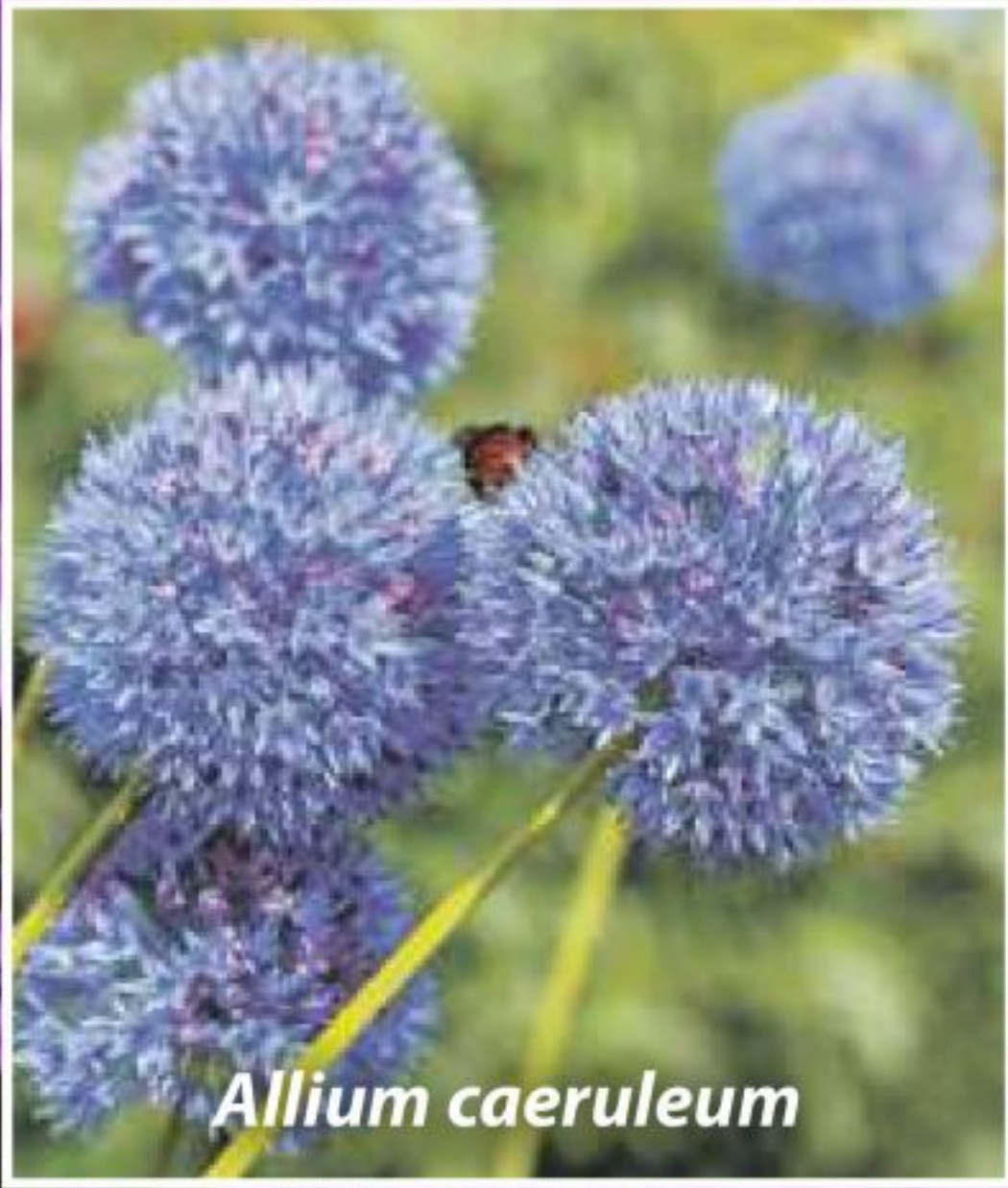
Garden News staff are following Government guidelines and working from home, so sadly we can't answer phone queries for the foreseeable future and can only reply to questions on email.



# Amazing Allium Saver Collection

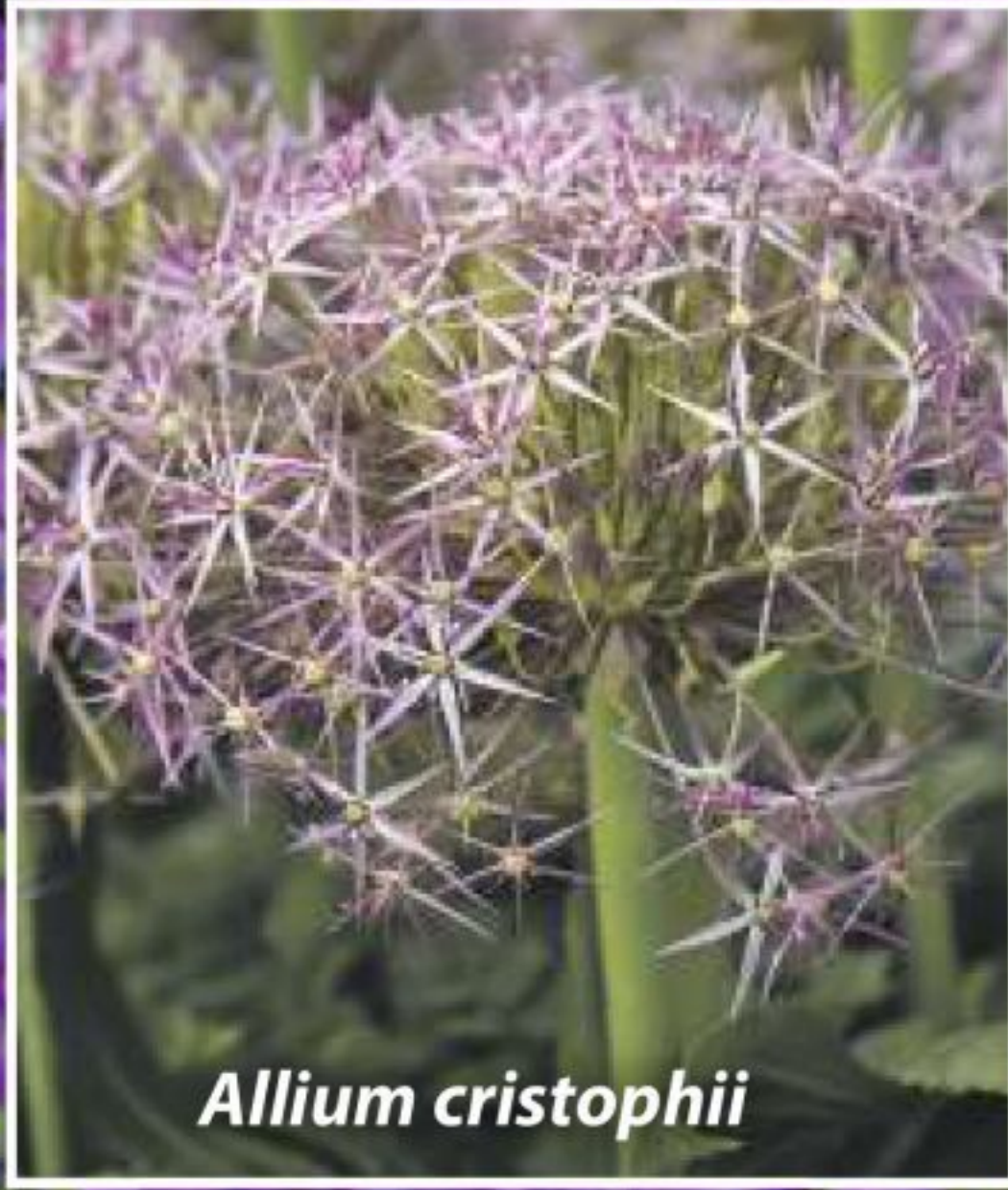


Allium sphaerocephalon



Allium caeruleum

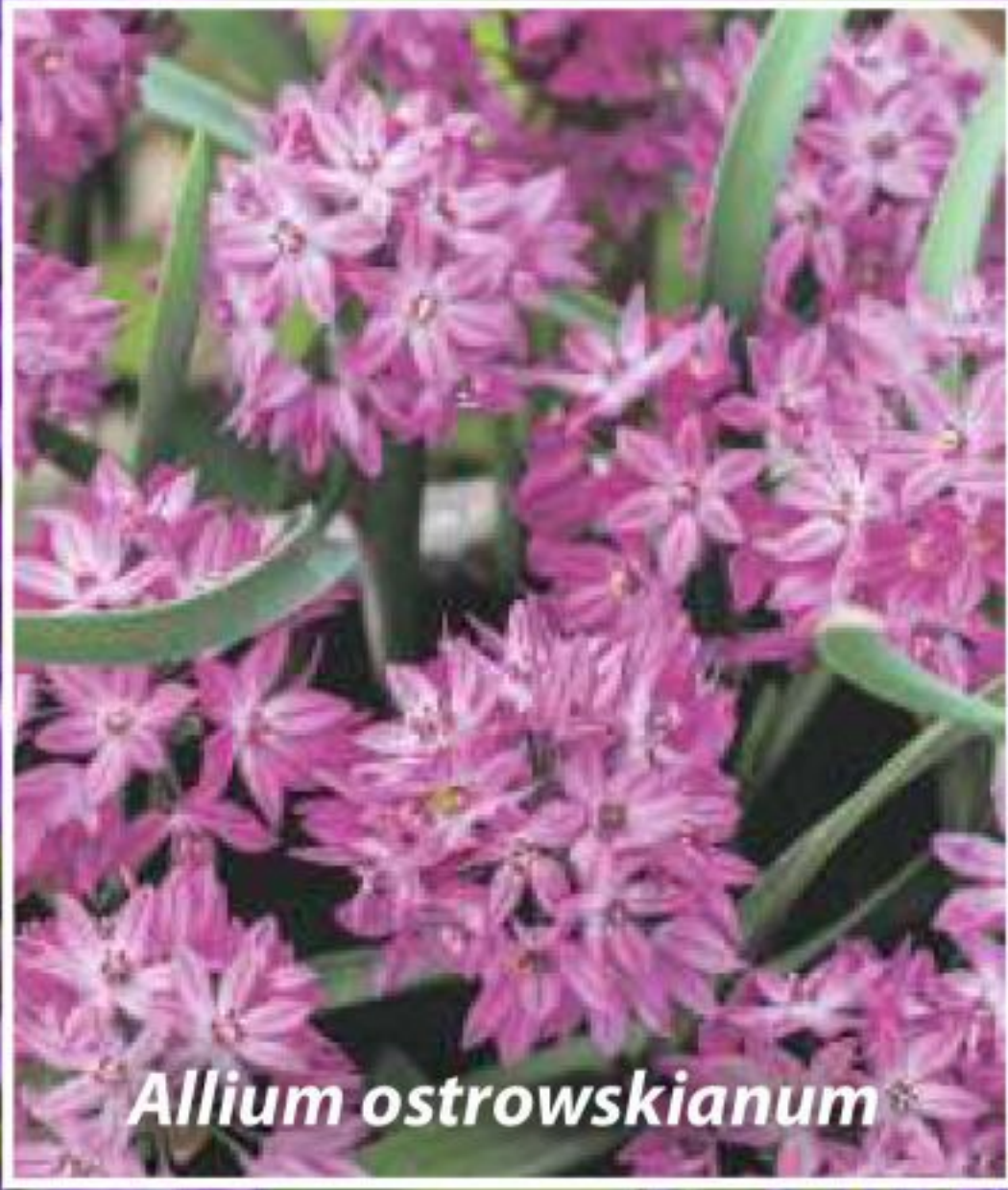
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Allium cristophii



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**Allium 'Purple Sensation'** (4 bulbs) - Globes of starry purple flowers that measure up to 8cm (3") across. Height: 90cm (36"). Spread: 10cm (4"). Size 9/10

**Allium caeruleum** (3 bulbs) Bright blue globes of starry flowers are carried on stiff upright stems. Height: 60cm (24"). Spread: 8cm (3"). Bulb size 4/5.

**Allium neapolitanum** (30 bulbs) Loose heads of starry white blooms. Height: 40cm (16"). Spread: 10cm (4")

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August Despatch.

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# TEA BREAK

## Weekly prize crossword

NUMBER  
**29**

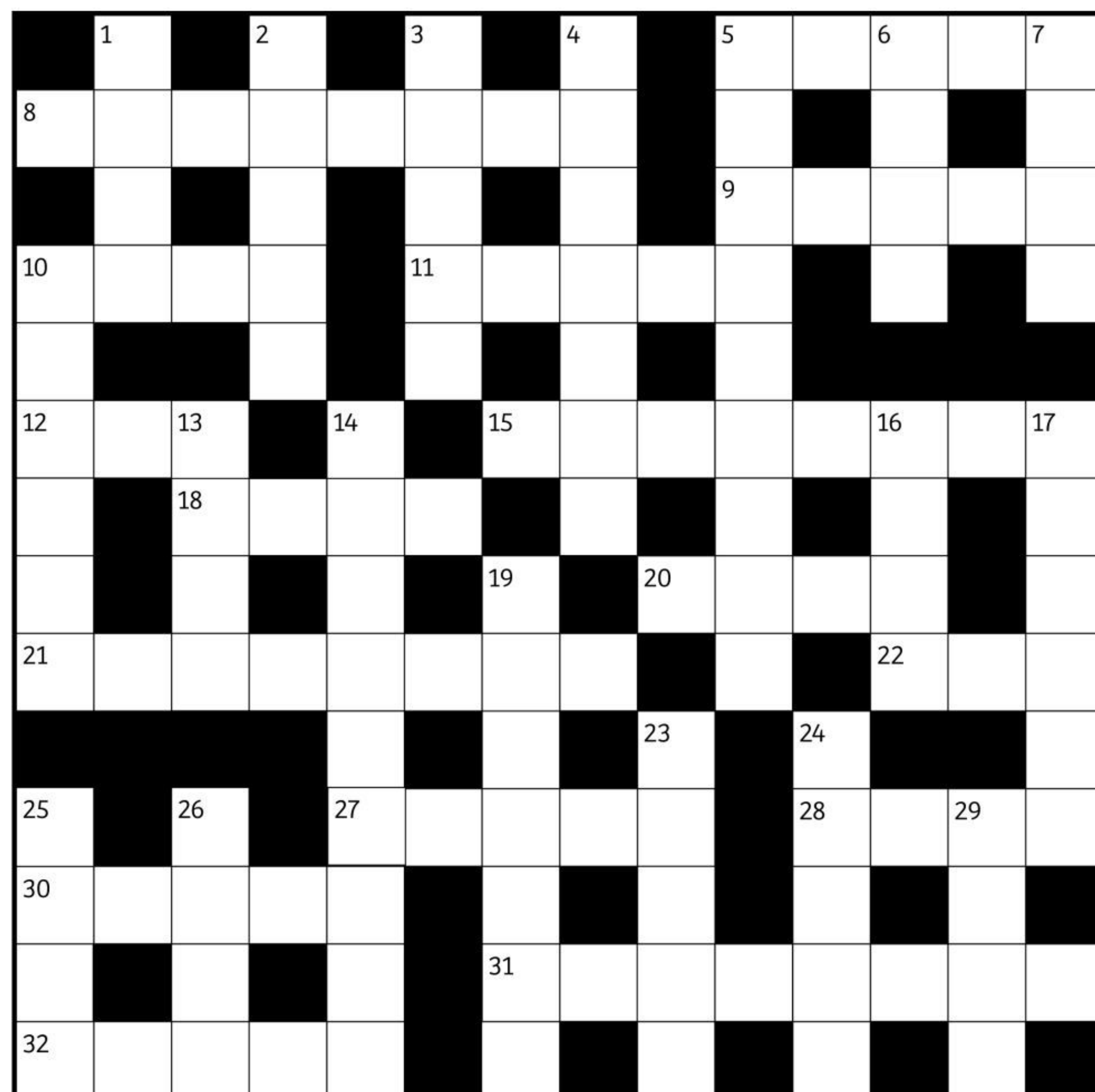
When all the answers are in place, the letters in the odd-numbered squares from 1 to 19 and the even-numbered squares from 20 to 30 will spell out the name of an award-winning hybrid tea rose that shares its name with a chart-topping duet of 1988.

### ACROSS

- 5** Tall tree with peeling bark (5)  
**8** Common name of the bulb *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (8)  
**9** Tree of the Cedrus genus (5)  
**10** Set of two things (4)  
**11** Angry (5)  
**12** See 17 down  
**15** Resort and port on the southern coast of Cyprus (8)  
**18** Small, sour variety of apple (4)  
**20** High moorland in the north (4)  
**21** Deciduous tree of the genus Carpinus (8)  
**22** Aged (3)  
**27** 'I' in the phonetic alphabet (5)  
**28** Portent (4)  
**30** Trap in a waste pipe (1-4)  
**31** South African country now Zambia/Zimbabwe (8)  
**32** First name of the female singer of the hidden song (5)

### DOWN

- 1** Late singer Miss Fitzgerald (4)  
**2** Small, juicy fruit (5)  
**3** Brown pigment (5)



- 4** Medium shrub known as the daisy bush (7)  
**5** Device for regulating the heart (9)  
**6** Assistant to an important person (4)  
**7** Spikes of cereal plants (4)  
**10** From Warsaw, perhaps (6)  
**13** Maple genus (4)  
**14** East Anglian university city (9)  
**16** Composition for one performer (4)

- 17 and 12 across** Folk song about lime trees set to music by Vaughan Williams (6,3)  
**19** Extremity of a ship's spar (7)  
**23** First name of the male singer of the hidden song (5)  
**24** Wars of the \_\_\_\_, 15th-century English civil conflict (5)  
**25** Alternative name for mimulus, and a type of rambling rose (4)  
**26** Loud, sharp cry (4)  
**29** Way out (4)

**WIN!**

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We're offering one crossword prize winner a free subscription to Garden News for the next 12 issues! If you're already one of our loyal subscribers – you could win a three-month subscription to one of our sister magazines (*Garden Answers*, *Modern Gardens* or *Landscape*) instead. They're all wonderful magazines packed with ideas to use in your garden. Due to safety advice over the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, we can't

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### SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD No 26 - June 27

**Across:** 8 Abundance 9 Etna 10 Edith 11 Spider 12 Hit 14 Versus 15 NATO 16 Lane 19 Nave 21 Dead 23 Airing 25 Sad 27 Maggie 28 Epsom 29 Judi 30 Realistic. **Down:** 1 Larch 2 Quiet 3 Admire 4 Anchusa 5 Densest 6 Beginning 7 Invest 13 ISA 14 Verdigris 17 Madeira 18 Arsenal 20 Via 22 Elatus 24 Nesbit 25 Smith 26 Dench. **Hidden clue:** *Ladies in Lavender* – starring Maggie Smith and Judi Dench. **Winner of Crossword No 26 is Anthony Leach from Bingley, West Yorkshire.,**

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# Pick of the POST

With Simon Caney, GN Editor



## Worth a long wait

I thought you may be interested to see a photo of my *Echinium pininana*. It was a small plant that I bought from Quex Gardens and planted four years ago. It pays to be patient as this year it's flowered for the first time and has produced four stems that are still heading skywards. It's been a real bee magnet as well but such a shame that the plant will then die. I'll save seed and hope for another display like this in four years' time!

**Steve Holmes, Dartford, Kent**



## Feast for a tortoise...

The flowers of *Clematis montana* are Freddie's favourite meal!

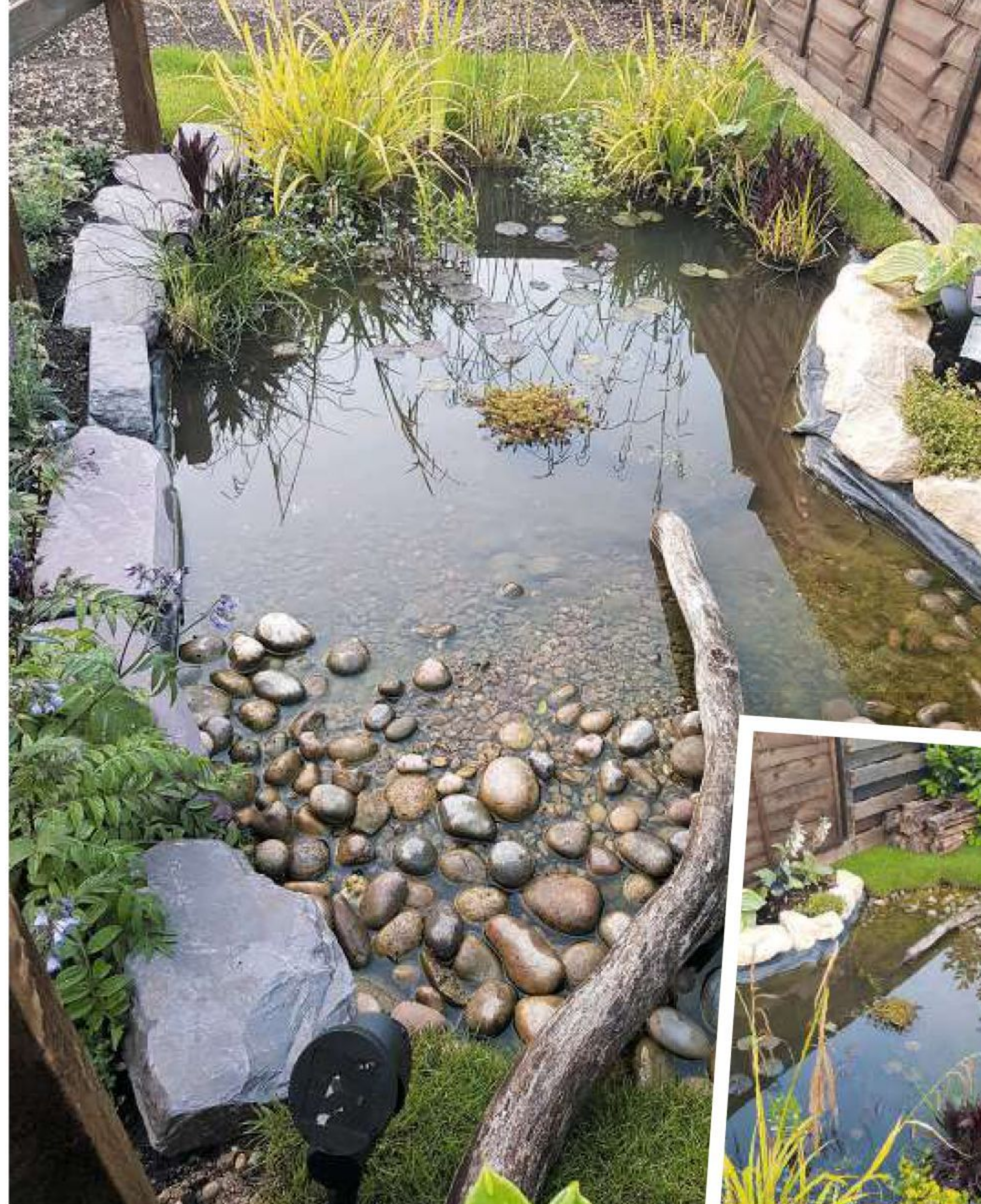
**Barbara Taylor, by email**



## Relaxing in bubbles

My husband created this flower pot man relaxing in an alyssum 'bubble bath'!

**Diana Young, Surrey**



## My pond paradise

Just thought I would share a couple of pictures of my wildlife pond. Although only nine months since construction, it's matured nicely and is a real pleasure to sit beside and watch all the wildlife it attracts. Damselfly, pond skaters, hedgehogs and even the odd pigeon

who likes to sit on the submerged branch to take a drink. The kids are itching to get pond dipping later in the year! And I can't wait to take delivery of my new corner summer house, which will be positioned looking over the pond...heaven!

**Mark Porter, by email**



## Waste not, want not

I was clearing the brassica plants out and thought the flowers were too pretty to throw away. So, I put some in a vase and they look beautiful!

**Patricia Peat, by email**

## Best of this week's posts and tweets

Allium 'Ambassador' being enjoyed by the wildlife.

**Dan Teasdale, Twitter**



Bought nearly dead plants and gave them a little bit of TLC!

**Lynda Byrne, Facebook**

A picture of my lovely peony 'Bowl of Beauty'.

**Julie Brown, Facebook**



This grass snake appeared from under my hosta this week!

**Lori Hunter, Facebook**





## My fight continues

I was hoping to send a picture of the zesty orange of my French marigold 'babies'. Unfortunately, 12 hours after planting up, 45 slimy foes were seen fleeing the scene of their crime. Despite the carnage I still refuse to use pellets or chemicals in my garden; instead I prowl at dusk and hand pick each one. We will fight them in the flower patch, the herb bed and the veg garden!

**Nicola Major, Hull**



## Simpler pleasures

My son Josh usually spends up to five hours a day on his schoolwork at home. With that and his Xbox gaming, it was nice to see him enjoying some fresh air and the simple pleasure of potting on his mint, grown with seed his nan gave him. He has made enough pots to give to his brothers and both grandparents and is now talking about growing to sell. Ever the businessman!

**Paul Perry, Halesowen**



## Best way to learn

My twin girls have missed their granny so much, so we were feeling blessed that the sun was shining and they could be put to work picking and shelling broad beans! The girls have learned so much about growing plants, flowers and veg that they love tending to the plants each day. The best sort of learning!

**Genevieve Drinkwater, Somerset**



I'm very new to gardening. Last year I had a couple of operations on my ankle and it slowed me down. I've truly loved spending time in my small garden, trying to make it a place to rest and relax. I'm super happy with how it's coming along!

**Eve Russell, Facebook**



My four year old son Allan picking his first 'Paris Market' carrot. He was so proud.  
**Allison Boyle, Facebook**



**STAR PRIZE**

## Inspiring others

I thought this picture of our small garden that my wife and I enjoy so much while we're locked down may help others in a similar position look to their own gardens. Most of the flowers and various lavenders have been grown using knowledge and experiences plucked from the pages of the Garden News, which I have subscribed to for many years.

We enjoy the arrival of the bees each summer, and all our bird visitors, including Ted the pigeon, and the many bossy hen sparrows investigating everything.

I would like to say thanks for your excellent magazine, which is passed around my family's increasing numbers to also enjoy.

**Mr and Mrs S E Oakes, Norwich**

**Simon says:** Wow, what a glorious picture, those pots look fabulous. We're delighted to hear from such long-standing readers and pleased that GN has helped your garden look so good!



Mr and Mrs Oakes win a £25 voucher from Mr Fothergill's for use in its mail-order catalogue. It's packed with a huge choice of quality seeds and exciting flower, fruit and veg plants.



## Old bench rejuvenated

This afternoon I was reading about painting old garden furniture in the latest edition of GN and thought you may be interested in the garden bench in our back garden. It's around 50 years old and because it was looking sad for itself, I decided to give it a makeover. I removed various pieces of rotted panels, including one of the legs, then gradually replaced them, and in this present environment I've painted it NHS blue! My wife and I regularly use it, plus the family when they can visit.

**Chris Cole, East Sussex**

## Get in touch!

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*A. cristophii*

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*A. sphaerocephalon*

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BAM1	Ultimate Allium Collection (mix of 50 bulbs)	£19.99		
BAM2	Ultimate Allium Collection (mix of 100 bulbs) <b>DOUBLE UP FOR ONLY 1p MORE!</b>	£20		
HBS1	Bulb Starter (500g pack)	£7.49		
HBS3	Bulb Starter (500g pack x2) <b>BUY 2 GET 1 FREE</b>	£14.98		
	<b>P&amp;P</b>	£4.95	1	£4.95
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July 18 2020 / Garden News 57



# my favourite PLACE

**BOTANIC GARDEN, CAMBRIDGE**  
By Annie Dellbridge



PHOTO: ALAMY

## 'You get a real sense of the knowledge that went before'



**Head Gardener at Fullers Mill Garden, Suffolk, Annie Dellbridge divides her time between managing the garden and teaching her apprentices.**  
[www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk](http://www.fullersmillgarden.org.uk)

**I first went to Cambridge University Botanic Garden when I was at college,** quite a few years ago now. They were teaching us about different plant groups and I just got more and more interested, it was addictive. You learn more, find out more, and develop favourite plants. It's full of horticultural tradition and you get a real sense of the knowledge that went before.

**There was a huge range of different plants,** all labelled with names and where they'd come from in the world. It was astonishing that they could have come so far. There was so much more information than you get in the garden centre!

**The winter garden looks fab, even in July** and the scented garden and the glasshouses are

amazing. I love the organisation of the systematic beds - they have to rearrange them as the plants are reclassified!

**I love the fact there are so many mature trees.** There's a central avenue with large conifers, such as giant redwood, but my favourite is *Ostrya carpinifolia*, the European hop hornbeam. It's beautiful; the hanging flowers look like a cross between hops and tassels, and the leaves are a bit like elm leaves. You can stand beneath, in the dappled shade, and watch the shafts of sunlight.

**I've used ideas from their Mediterranean beds back at Fullers Mill** as we have sandy, dry soil there. I look at how they are laid out and what plant varieties

they have included, like spartium and *Convolvulus cneorum*. Even simple things like *Lavandula dentata*, as its good to get away from the bog-standard 'Hidcote' variety.

**I like to walk through the whole garden and clamber over the alpine area** - it's set out to scramble on! There's a sense of childlike excitement about it and there are lots of nooks and crannies full of exciting things. I know the Head of Horticulture, Sally Petitt - she brings her students to Fullers Mill and we take ours there. It's always nice to wander around and talk plants with her.

■ **Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE;**  
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